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Comment by Paul Owen, Chief Executive

Welcome to April's issue of Canoe Focus

I would like to wish all our of GB teams well in the forthcoming international competitions. The European Sprint and Slalom Championships will be taking place before the next edition of Canoe Focus (the sprint Europeans will be held in Milan and the slalom Europeans will be held in Krakow). Both of the European Championships are the final opportunity to secure boats in the Beijing Olympics.

Good luck to the GB teams.

Calling the BCU office?

We have an additional telephone number to save you money

We have been aware that some members have telephone packages that exclude 0845 telephone numbers. Ofcom have intervened and as a result, 0300 numbers have been introduced which all providers will include in their call packages.

We are one of the first organisations to introduce one of these new numbers.

Dialing 0300 0119 500 puts you through to the customer service team and calls are charged at normal landline rates (the 0300 number is treated the same as 01 and 02 numbers).

The 0845 number will continue to exist, so both the 0845 and the 0300 number will put you through to the BCU office.

E newsletters



Canoe England is sending electronic newsletters to its members. The newsletters contain up to date information on areas such as: personal performance awards, volunteers, coaching, access and membership offers.

The first newsletter went out at the beginning of February and the next one is due out in April.

If you would like to receive the e newsletter, please ensure that your email contact details are correct. You can do this by going to www.canoe-england.org.uk, click on 'membership' at the top of page, enter your membership number and your postcode and click on the left hand tab 'update my details'. It is easy to unsubscribe too, just follow the link on the e newsletter.

Articles written by you needed!

We welcome content for the magazine from all members, regions, clubs, coaches, approved centres and competition or recreational paddlers. You don't have to be an experienced journalist to contribute.

Our recent online survey asking members for their feedback on the magazine found that most people said they want to see more of these types of articles/content:

- More UK based articles, news and events.
- More recreational articles.
- More opportunities to share experiences with paddlers – this might be how your club raised money or it might be a new piece of kit that you have just bought and can't live without.
- Maybe you want to compile what you think are the top ten places to paddle in the UK.
- Or you might want to share a favourite river or beauty spot with others.

The magazine is for members, so if you have anything to share with the paddling community – please email chloe.nelson-lawrie@bcu.org.uk

We also want to hear from young people. Tell us why you enjoy paddling so much or your favourite tricks and moves.

A reminder for Canoe England members – during selected times of the year members can take advantage of a 20% discount at Cotswold Outdoor (as opposed to the usual 15% at other times of the year). These 20% periods are as follows:

- 15th - 18th May
- 7th - 10th August
- 6th - 9th November



Happy Paddling!

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@canoefocus.co.uk, or mailed to 2b Graphic Design, 49 Greenfields, St Ives, Cambs 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. Next Copy date is the **1st MAY 2007**.

Material arriving after this date cannot be included in the **JUNE 2008** issue. Canoe Focus encourages contributions of any nature but reserves the right to edit and condense to fill the space available and unless otherwise stated the publishers assume no responsibility for the return of unsolicited manuscripts, artwork or photographs. Opinions expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the BCU, its committees or members. The printing of an advertisement in Canoe Focus does not necessarily mean that the BCU endorse the company, item or service advertised. All material in Canoe Focus is strictly copyright and all rights are reserved. Reproduction without prior permission from the editor is forbidden.

Competition calendar

| | Start | Finish | Discipline | Event | | Start | Finish | Discipline | Event |
|--------|--------|-------------------|--|---|--------|-------------------|---|-------------------|--|
| April | 12-Apr | | Surf | Widemouth Handicap | May | 17-May | 18-May | Canoe Sailing | Weston |
| | 12-Apr | 13-Apr | Slalom | Senior Selection - Race 1 & 2 - Zoetermeer, NED | | 18-May | | Marathon Racing | Mid Weaver |
| | 12-Apr | 13-Apr | Slalom | Matlock - Div 2 & 3 | | 18-May | | Marathon Racing | Grand-Dunk |
| | 12-Apr | 13-Apr | Canoe Polo | BUSA Champs - Hatfield Water Park | | 18-May | | Marathon Racing | 1066 at Tonbridge |
| | 13-Apr | | Freestyle | Youth Series - Llangollen | | 18-May | | Marathon Racing | Nottingham |
| | 13-Apr | | Coach Update | Wessex - South West - Weymouth | | 18-May | | Marathon Racing | Southampton - K2 Assessment |
| | 13-Apr | | Club Forum | Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre - East | | 20-May | | Marathon Racing | Loch Lomond Balmaha |
| | 13-Apr | | Marathon Racing | Gailey | | 22-May | | Marathon Racing | Forth/Clyde - 10km Dullatur |
| | 13-Apr | | Marathon Racing | Norwich - K1 Assessment | | 24-May | | Wild Water Racing | Stone - Div B & Wavehopper |
| | 13-Apr | | Marathon Racing | Fal | | 24-May | | Marathon Racing | Loch Lubnaig |
| | 19-Apr | | Slalom | Senior, U23 & Junior Selection Race 3 HPP | | 24-May | 25-May | Slalom | Llandysul - Div 2 & 3 |
| | 19-Apr | | Canoe Polo | Div 2 North - Leeds | | 24-May | 25-May | Slalom | Tees - Div 3 & 4 |
| | 19-Apr | | Wild Water Racing | Prudhoe, Hexham, Wavehopper | | 24-May | 25-May | Canoe Polo | ACM & National Club Championships - Hatfield Water Park, Doncaster |
| | 19-Apr | 20-Apr | Wild Water Racing | Tryweryn - Junior and Senior Selection | | 25-May | | Marathon Racing | Reading Circuit |
| | 19-Apr | 20-Apr | Slalom | Sowerby Bridge - Div 2 and 3 | | 25-May | | Marathon Racing | Loch Lubnaig - 10km K1 Championship |
| | 19-Apr | 20-Apr | Canoe Sailing | Asymmetric Open - Llandegfedd | | 31-May | | Local Event | NW Sprint Event - Fishmoor, Blackburn |
| | 20-Apr | | Wild Water Racing | Nene - Div B and Wavehopper | | 31-May | | Marathon Racing | Windsor Vets |
| | 20-Apr | | Marathon Racing | Ratho | | 31-May | 1-Jun | Slalom | Langham Farm - Div 3 and 4 |
| | 20-Apr | | Marathon Racing | Anker Valley | | 31-May | 1-Jun | Slalom | Alva Div 3 & 4 - Scottish School Champs |
| | 20-Apr | | Marathon Racing | Calder 1 | | 1-Jun | | Marathon Racing | Leukaemia Marathon |
| | 20-Apr | | Marathon Racing | Maidstone | | 1-Jun | | Marathon Racing | Macclesfield 2 |
| | 20-Apr | | Wild Water Racing | Avon - Div B and Wavehopper | | 5-Jun | 7-Jun | Sprint Racing | World Cup 1 - Szeged, HUN |
| | 20-Apr | | Wild Water Racing | Carlisle, Wavehopper | | 5-Jun | 8-Jun | Wild Water Racing | World Championships - Ivrea, ITA |
| | 26-Apr | | Slalom | North Walls Short Course - Div 4 | | 7-Jun | | Freestyle | Youth Series - Teesside |
| | 26-Apr | | Surf | St Ives Bay | | 7-Jun | | Slalom | Alva Short Course - Div 4 |
| | 26-Apr | 27-Apr | Coach Update | Yorkshire - Aldward, near York | | 7-Jun | 8-Jun | Sprint Racing | National Regatta - HPP, Nottingham |
| | 26-Apr | 27-Apr | Slalom | Oughtibridge - Div 3 & 4 | | 7-Jun | 8-Jun | Slalom | HPP - Premier & Div 1 - Pan Celtic Cup |
| 26-Apr | 27-Apr | Marathon Racing | Glasgow-Edinburgh Challenge | 7-Jun | 8-Jun | Slalom | Sowerby Bridge - Div 3 & 4 | | |
| 27-Apr | | Marathon Racing | Northwich | 13-Jun | 15-Jun | Sprint Racing | World Cup 2 - Duisburg, GER | | |
| 27-Apr | | Marathon Racing | Bedford - K2 Assessment | 13-Jun | 15-Jun | Slalom | Euro Senior Cup - Roztokey u Krivoklatu, CZE | | |
| 27-Apr | | Marathon Racing | Worcester | 14-Jun | | Sprint Racing | Wokingham/Reading GP Junior Sprints | | |
| 27-Apr | | Marathon Racing | Tamar Circuit | 14-Jun | 15-Jun | Wild Water Racing | World Cup 1 & 2 - Karlovy Vary, CZE | | |
| 2-May | 5-May | Wild Water Racing | Tour D'Ecosse | 14-Jun | 15-Jun | Marathon Racing | World Cup - Brandenburg, GER | | |
| 3-May | | Wild Water Racing | Derwent Dash - Div B & Wavehopper | 14-Jun | 15-Jun | Slalom | Fairmile - Div 2, 3 & 4 | | |
| 3-May | | Wild Water Racing | Grandtully Sprint - Div A & B | 14-Jun | 15-Jun | Slalom | Stone Town Council Cup - Div 3 and 4 | | |
| 3-May | 4-May | Sprint Racing | National Regatta - Assessment Race - HPP | 14-Jun | 15-Jun | Canoe Sailing | Ullswater | | |
| 3-May | 4-May | Slalom | Tryweryn - Graveyard - Premier and Div 1 | 15-Jun | | Sprint Racing | Scottish Sprint Championships | | |
| 3-May | 4-May | Slalom | Bala Mill - Div 2 & 3 | 15-Jun | | Marathon Racing | Northwich Lightning Race 2 | | |
| 4-May | | Wild Water Racing | Awe - Div A & B - Youth | 15-Jun | | Marathon Racing | Oxford Falcon Midsummer Marathon | | |
| 4-May | 5-May | Slalom | River Loddon - Sandford Mill - Div 3 & 4 | 15-Jun | | Marathon Racing | Bristol | | |
| 5-May | | Wild Water Racing | Tay - Aberfeldy to Grandtully | 15-Jun | | Marathon Racing | Royal | | |
| 9-May | 11-May | Slalom | European Championships - Olympic Qualification - Krakow, POL | 15-Jun | | Marathon Racing | Leighton Buzzard | | |
| 10-May | | Freestyle | Youth Series - Boulsters | 15-Jun | | Marathon Racing | Burton | | |
| 10-May | | Sprint Racing | Linlithgow Regatta | 18-Jun | | Marathon Racing | Lowport Summer Series - 10km | | |
| 10-May | | Sprint Racing | Elmbridge Sprints | 21-Jun | | Coach Update | Norfolk - East | | |
| 10-May | | Wild Water Racing | Wagon Lane - Wavehopper | 21-Jun | | Wild Water Racing | Conwy Ascent | | |
| 10-May | 11-May | Slalom | Holme Pierrepoint - Div 1 & 2 | 21-Jun | | Marathon Racing | Conwy Ascent | | |
| 10-May | 11-May | Slalom | Wagon Lane - Div 3 & 4 | 21-Jun | 22-Jun | Slalom | World Cup 1 - Prague, CZE | | |
| 10-May | 11-May | Slalom | Seaton Park - Div 3 & 4 | 21-Jun | 22-Jun | Wild Water Racing | World Cup 3 & 4 - Lofer, AUT | | |
| 10-May | 11-May | Surf | Red River | 21-Jun | 22-Jun | Surf | HP Series | | |
| 11-May | | Marathon Racing | Waveney | 21-Jun | 22-Jun | Slalom | Cardington - Div 2 & 3 - British Youth & Veterans Championships | | |
| 11-May | | Marathon Racing | Chester 1 - K1 Assessment | 22-Jun | | Wild Water Racing | Chester Dee - Div B and Wavehopper | | |
| 11-May | | Marathon Racing | Basingstoke Canal | 22-Jun | | Sprint Racing | Kirkcaldy Regatta | | |
| 11-May | | Marathon Racing | Royal Lemington Spa | 22-Jun | | Marathon Racing | Exe Circuit | | |
| 11-May | | Marathon Racing | Lower Exe & Estuary | 22-Jun | | Marathon Racing | Derwent | | |
| 14-May | | Marathon Racing | Lowport Summer Series - 10km | 22-Jun | | Marathon Racing | Hereford | | |
| 15-May | 18-May | Sprint Racing | European Championships - Olympic Qualification - Milan, ITA | 27-Jun | 29-Jun | Sprint Racing | World Cup 3 - Poznan, POL | | |
| 17-May | | Canoe Polo | National League Play-Offs - Liverpool | 28-Jun | | Marathon Racing | Royal Paddling Challenge | | |
| 17-May | | Canoe Polo | Div 1 - Liverpool | 28-Jun | 29-Jun | Slalom | World Cup 2 - Tacen, SLO | | |
| 17-May | | Canoe Polo | Div 1 Ladies - Liverpool | 28-Jun | 29-Jun | Slalom | Sheperton - Div 3 & 4 | | |
| 17-May | | Coach Update | Southern - Hampshire | 28-Jun | 29-Jun | Slalom | Howsham Weir - Div 2 & 3 - Yorkshire Club Championships | | |
| 17-May | 18-May | Slalom | Fairmile - Div 2, 3 & 4 | 28-Jun | 29-Jun | Marathon Racing | Cheshire Ring | | |
| 17-May | 18-May | Slalom | Orton Mere - Div 3 & 4 | 29-Jun | | Marathon Racing | Shropshire | | |
| 17-May | 18-May | Surf | Red River - Re Run | 29-Jun | | Marathon Racing | Wey | | |

I am new to competition events – what's it all about?

There are many paddlers who may not have thought about the competition side much, but the competition disciplines DO welcome newcomers to their sport. Information and contact details for each of the Competition Disciplines are available within the BCU Directory, or alternatively visit the BCU web site (www.bcu.org.uk) and look under 'disciplines' to visit a competition website.

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

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 Andy Goodsell: andy.goodsell@bcu.org.uk





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Canoe England members can receive 10% discount at selected canoe and kayak retailers!

Here at Canoe England we continue to seek great deals and discounts that members can benefit from. We look to secure only deals that we think are relevant to members.

We are now pleased to announce that we have negotiated a 10% discount at selected canoe and kayak retailers around the country. For the retailer's contact details visit the Canoe England member's area: www.canoe-england.org.uk

To take advantage of the 10% discount, just show your membership card at the time of purchase.

WEST MIDLANDS

Bear Creek Adventure, Worcestershire
Joel Watersports, Worcester
Canoe Kayak Trader, Warwick
Paddle Sport & Wave Form, Warwick
West Midland Canoe Centre, Walsall

YORKSHIRE

Fear Gear, Doncaster
Robin Hood Watersports, Heckmondwike
Wipeout, Sheffield,
Yorkshire Canoe and Kayak, Doncaster

LONDON AND SOUTH EAST

Brighton Canoes Ltd, E. Sussex
Kent Canoes, Kent - Kent Canoes offer 10% discount on boats and 5% discount off kit.
The Family Boat Shop, Surrey
UK Kayaking, West Sussex
Whitewater The Canoe Centre, Middlesex

EAST MIDLANDS

Desperate Measures, Nottingham
Tradewinds Outdoor, Northamptonshire

EASTERN

Nucleus Watersports, Clacton
Reeds Of Cambridge, Cambridge

SOUTHERN

Berkshire Canoes, Reading
Marsport Ltd, Reading
Riverside Central, Oxford
Woodmill, Southampton

NORTH WEST

Brookbank Canoes, Cheshire

CUMBRIA

Carlisle Canoes, Carlisle
UK Canoes, Lancaster
Windermere Canoe Kayak, Bowness-on-Windermere

SOUTH WEST

Cheltenham Canoes, Cheltenham
Cornwall Canoes, Newquay
Family Adventure Store, Wiltshire
Kayak and Paddles, Plymouth
Outdoor Active Ltd, Gloucestershire
Performance Kayaks, Weston-Super-Mare
Totnes Kayaks, Devon

SCOTLAND

Stirling Canoes, Stirling, Central Scotland
Nevis Canoes, Fort William, Highlands

If you have any suggestions for improving the member benefits you receive, please get in touch – we could like to hear your comments.
Email: chloe.nelson-lawrie@bcu.org.uk or call 0845 370 9500

Member's offers



Canoe England has teamed up with a number quality partners to offer you a range of offers and discounts. For details of how to claim the discounts log in to the 'Members Only' section of the Canoe England web site.

15% discount at **COTSWOLD** or 20% off on selected dates: 15-18th May; 7-10th August; 6-9th November

15% discount of **LUCOZADE** products.

Save over 20% when subscribing to 12 issues of **CANOE KAYAK** magazine.

Exclusive 10% off **SUNSAIL** holidays to Turkey, Greece and Antigua.

10% discount on your first year's boat insurance with **NW BROWN**.

7.5% discount on **CONCEPT 2** rowers.

5% discount on **SALAMANDER TOURS** open canoe tours.

CRAFT THERMAL TOPS – This top has become a favourite for paddlers and we are pleased to be able to offer this at a special rate of only £15.99 + p&p. These short sleeved black tops are available in men's and women's sizes. To purchase visit www.bcushop.org.uk.



Did you know you can also receive discount at the Nene and Tryweryn?

Nene – For BCU members its costs £10 instead on £15 per session. If you apply for a user card then the price will decrease further – £10 to £8 for adults; £8 to £6 for juniors.

Trewyem – BCU members get half price discount from £14 to £7.



Competition corner

We are offering one lucky BCU member the following prize...

£20 worth of Cotswold vouchers.
Winners will be chosen at random.
Good luck!

For your chance to win...

Simply answer the following question:

On which dates can members receive a 20% discount on Cotswold Outdoor products? (as

opposed to the standard 15% discount)

Closing date is 30th April.



Thank you to all of you who entered the last prize draw and completed the membership survey. The winner who was picked at random was **Martin Mills**.

American success

The Sweetwater Symposium from an Englishman's perspective.

I felt honoured to be invited to the Sweetwater Kayak Symposium, but also a little daunted – I'd been asked to re-orientate some of the top coach education deliverers in the USA into the new BCU schemes. There has been mixed reaction to the changes in the UK, so I had no idea what the response would be like over the pond. I've done a few of these re-orientations now and each one has got easier, not least because I have actually directed quite a few of the new Level 1 courses, so I'm aware of not only the delivery issues, but more importantly what a great course it is.

My apprehension was completely unfounded, the course directors out there were so switched on to the philosophies of the new scheme and they couldn't wait to get stuck into delivering it. They didn't have to wait long, the following day we were due to start the USA's first new Level 1 course and there were six people booked on.

Word must have spread like wild fire because when I showed up at Fort Desoto Park, Tampa Bay, Florida, to deliver the course, the numbers had swelled to twelve! My experience of these courses

is bigger is better, so I was extremely happy with the situation.

Sweetwater Sea Kayak Symposium is traditionally just that: a sea symposium. So when I rolled up with trailer loads of open canoes, sit on tops and recreational kayaks, courtesy of my new found friend Russell Farrow of Sweetwater, it was all a bit revolutionary. The candidates had a great time experimenting with all the different boats, a range of paddles varying from white water blades, canoe paddles, Greenland sticks and what they call in the USA Euro blades as well as lots of different coaching styles, delivery methods and new skills.

The five days seemed to fly by in the glorious sunshine and warm waters of the Gulf of Mexico – what a great location! It had been an excellent course due in no small part to the knowledge and skills and of my co-deliverers and the enthusiasm of the candidates. Special thanks go to Tom Burgh, Steve Maynard, Bill Lozano, Jack Phelan, Shawna Franklin and Leon Somme. The candidates all seemed really excited at being the first American 'new' Level 1 coaches,



I wish them all success in their future paddling and coaching.

Jean Totz did a phenomenal job of organising the symposium, and keeping everything running smoothly – Thanks Jean. Russell Farrow organised boats and kit for me, as well as everyone else at the symposium and generally showed me great hospitality throughout my twelve-day stay, including a guided tour of the Myakka River (highest population of alligators in the US) and a superb paddle with manatees on the Weeki Wachee River. Look out for Russell's Vacation to Hell blog, link from the Sweetwater Kayak's web site. I'm definitely hoping to make the 13th Sweetwater Sea Kayak Symposium in February 2009, want to join me?

PHIL HADLEY



BCU Lifeguard conventions

This year the BCU Lifeguards will be holding two training conventions:

10th -11th May

Herts Young Mariners Base, Cheshunt, Herts
There will be a range of BCU Lifeguard courses available throughout the weekend, including Assistant and Core Lifeguard (training and/or assessment), Aquatic First Aid (Level 1), Primary First Aid and Paediatric First Aid. There will also be spinal management, extended life support, VHF and navigation workshops available.

Cost: £35 (Lifeguard unit members)

£45 (Non-Lifeguard unit members)

For more details please e-mail convention@bcu.org.uk or download the information pack that contains full details and booking forms from the BCU Lifeguards web site.

13th and 14th September, Llandysul Outdoor Education Centre, Carmarthenshire

Further details to follow. For more information please email convention@bcu.org.uk

New Anti-Doping rules

Following recent changes to the ICF Anti-Doping rules (canoe polo teams) and the formation of a 'National Anti-Doping Panel' on 1st April 2008, the BCU Anti-Doping rules have been amended accordingly and take effect with immediate effect. Full details of the new ICF and BCU Anti-Doping rules and Summary of Changes are available on the BCU web site

www.bcu.org.uk/bcu/2008-1-anti-doping-policy.aspx

Should you require any further information on these matters please contact andy.sambell@bcu.org.uk – 0845 370 9528

EVENTS

York River Canoe Race

Saturday 26th July, 2008

Bring your friends and families with their canoes to enjoy a great day out at historic York. Free car parking on the riverside.

Camping facilities available. Three different distances all passing through the city centre (2,500; 5,000 and 7,500 metres)

Mass start: 2.00pm (starting and finishing at the Millennium Bridge). 24 hand carved trophies for different categories of canoes: single and doubles, GP kayaks, Canadian canoes, tourers, sea kayaks, K1/K2/river racers. Team trophies for all courses (three canoes to count).

Registration on the day: 12.30-1.45pm at

Millennium Bridge prize giving: 3.45pm

Entry fees: single paddlers £5.00; double kayaks

and Canadian crews £8.00. Race organised in association with York CC. Event flyer and information from organiser: Phil Puckrin on 01904 654 302. Email: philpuckrin@freenet.co.uk

Paddling challenge

Saturday and Sunday 28-29th June

Entrants are invited for the 2008 Cheshire Ring Race. The 96 mile Ring can be run as a challenge to finish within 24 hours or as a competitive race, either all the way or as a relay. Almost any combination of boats and paddlers can be accepted. The main class is the ten paddler relay which is designed for youth groups and clubs as each team includes five juniors or females and five seniors. Each junior and senior pair takes it in turn to paddle one of the nineteen stages and then rest for four stages.

The Ring covers the 96 miles, 92 locks and five tunnels of the Cheshire Ring of canals. It starts

near Poynton and heads north up the Macclesfield Canal to Marple, then follows the Peak Forest Canal to Ashton, the Ashton Canal to Manchester City centre and a short section of Rochdale Canal. The Bridgewater Canal heads out of the city to Lymm and Preston Brook where the Trent and Mersey Canal takes over to run south through Northwich to Kildesley. Then it is back onto the Macclesfield Canal to head north through Congleton and Macclesfield to finish at Poynton.

For more information contact Chris Cleaver. Email chcleaver@tiscali.co.uk. 01625 878838.

Last year's race was featured in the Granada TV programme Locks and Quays on 14th February 2008. You can view it on www.itvlocal.com/granada/documentaries, go to this page and there is a box on the right of the screen. Scroll down to find Locks and Quays episode 7 - and play. www.madcc.co.uk

EVENTS

Stackpole Sea Kayak Festival 24-26 May 2008

In its third year, a kayak event with a difference on the theme of 'paddling lightly', looking after the wonderful environment here.

The festival will be based at the National Trust's residential centre at Stackpole and run in conjunction with the WCA who are providing a team of top flight coaches for the event.

During the day, there will be a choice of island and coastal journeys with Caldey, Skokholm and Skomer all within striking distance (weather permitting). On hand will be wildlife experts to share their wealth of knowledge of what's 'out there'. Grey seals, dolphins, puffins, razorbills won't be too far away.

In the evenings, talks by guest speakers and a barbecue with music... or a gentle walk down to one of Britain's finest beaches, Barafundle, just 20 minutes away.

Cost is £120 a person, fully catered, inside in their centre. Alternatively join in the fun but provide for yourself on their camping field for £60 per person. For local people, day tickets will be available at £15 per person.

Prior booking is essential! Please contact: Gez Richards 01646 661464

Email: gez.richards@nationaltrust.org.uk

HH Adventure Races

Organisers TrailPlus have added two additional venues to the 2008 line-up. Dates for the Helly Hansen Adventure Challenge Series are:

- Sunday 21 September: Cannock Chase, Staffs
- Sunday 19 October: Longmoor Camp, Hamps
- Sunday 7th December: Hawley, Surrey
- Sunday 1 February (2009): Pirbright, Surrey
- Early spring 2009: Cumbria – location TBC

With adventure racing becoming an increasingly popular sport, the two new venues have secured the Helly Hansen Adventure Challenge Series as the UK's biggest one-day adventure race team event.

The five one-day races can be entered individually or as a series. Blending physical challenge and teamwork, they are designed for teams of three, who must stay together throughout the race. Each adventure race features a three-way mix of trail running (10k), challenging mountain biking (25k) and canoeing on flat water in an inflatable kayak (1.5k). The fastest teams are likely to compete the course in under three hours, with most coming in within five hours and a few crossing the finish line in seven hours.

The order of activities is revealed on the day and disciplines may be split, plus competitors will face a few testing challenges thrown in between circuits. However, the route is marked, so navigation skills are not necessary.

The team entry price is £135 per event – an early entry incentive will be offered and discounts are available for clubs or organisations entering five or more teams in any one race. There will be team prizes for race winners and for pole position in the overall series. Check out www.hellyhansen.com.

Obituaries

Robert Laughton



Robert Laughton, known as Rob to most of his friends died suddenly on Friday 18th January.

He started paddling at the from the age nine with his brother James on the 16th March 1979 with Sheffield CC at Glossop Road Baths. Rob held the position of Baths Office for many years and was an integral part of the club. He organised competitions, trips and weekends away to many places as he liked rivers, surf and sea.

Rob tried slalom and white water racing, but he enjoyed marathon paddling (in Div 8) and polo the most. He played polo, in goal, for Sheffield at regional level and Trent Valley at national level. Rob was access officer for the River Don and often paddled the upper to lower Don.

He gained qualifications in kayaking and canoeing: Four Star Kayak, Four Star Sea Kayak, Three Star Open Canoe as well as Canoe Safety Test, Level Two Canoe Coach and Senior Kayak Instructor.

Rob was a committed and enthusiastic multi-discipline watersports instructor who worked at a number of centres across the Yorkshire region including Rother Valley, Underbank and Hatfield Water Park. He also held national governing body qualifications in sailing, archery, power boating, personal watercraft, mountain biking as well and many others.

His love of the outdoors started at an early age, walking and camping with his family and with the cubs and scouts. In more recent years Rob and his wife Sally took a year out to fulfil their dream of travelling the world. Their adventures took them to places as far and wide as the Arctic Circle, Galapagos and Easter Islands, New Zealand, Australia and Mongolia.

As well as canoeing, Rob was passionate about children, animals and the environment. He was always devising some new activity to inspire the young people he both knew and worked with. He often came home with an injured animal or bird to nurse back to health and was a champion recycler of all materials well before it was popular to do so. He could always make something useful out of things that other people would throw away.

Rob was a loyal and reliable friend always ready to help anyone unquestionably at a moments notice. Rob was well known for always wearing his shorts whatever the time of year, his sense of mischief and adventure were legendary. He will be sadly missed by his family, friends and all who knew him for his love of life sense of humour and his smile. Rob leaves behind wife Sally and 11-week-old son George, mum, dad and brother.

JAMES LAUGHTON

Andrew Clough



Andy Clough, Olympic C2 paddler and chemical engineer, was born in January 1970, and died following a road traffic accident on 4th July 2007 in Melbourne, Australia, aged 37. Andy was one of Britain's most successful and skilled exponents of the single blade, known mainly for his paddling

skills in the front of a C2, which he raced internationally with his brother for nearly 20 years.

Before paddling C2 he competed in slalom in both kayak and C1, and briefly raced C1 in wild water racing at the Junior Pre-World Championships in 1987, and the Junior World Championships a year later. 1988 also saw him race in senior WWR C2 at the Europa Cup in Norway and Scotland, and C2 slalom on the slalom intermediate team in Prague, both of the latter with this brother Iain. From here he went from strength to strength, and the Clough brothers started to focus on C2 slalom with the Barcelona Olympics as their focus. They eventually finished 12th at the La Seu d'Urgell course in Spain. In 1993 they were C2 slalom national champions, but retired from slalom at the end of the season.

The Cloughs returned to WWR, and competed internationally for most years through to 2005. Always a relaxed and fun individual to be with, Andy was also happy leading his C2 down some of the most testing race courses in the world, and had a serious and determined side to his training.

As well as paddling, Andy could climb, run, mountain bike and ski. Having met and married his wife Michelle he also learnt to ride horses, to lead, to muck-out, build stables, and having had his son James, to change nappies and feed. In his professional life he gained his degree in Chemical Engineering from Leeds University in 1993 and joined DuPont on Teesside where he rose through the engineering and management ranks.

Having trained and competed in Australia in 1992, and honeymooned in Australia over the millennium, Andy emigrated to Melbourne in January 2006. The Clough family settled happily, Andy started racing C1 WWR again and had become the State of Victoria and the Australian Open C1 WWR Champion on first attempts. He was looking forward to racing C2 again with his brother later in 2007. He had joined a local contract engineering firm, and again started to rise through the ranks. He was thoroughly enjoying himself and Michelle suggested he was getting more stress at home than at work.

He was on his way to work when he was killed. Two memorial services, one in Australia and one in the UK attracted a significant number of people, including friends who flew internationally to pay their respects. He is badly missed by his family, and many friends. James will never grow up really to know his father in the way that many others of us did, but has since been taken canoeing in the family tradition.

IAIN CLOUGH

PHOTOGRAPH: TONY TICKLE

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Designed as a tripper, the Wilderness's well-rounded stability profile and moderate rocker inspire confidence and manoeuvrability, whether on a loaded tour or an evening paddle.

The Wenonah Wilderness is available in Royalex and proven lightweight composite constructions at a price for most budgets.

For more information contact Richard Bennett at Outdoor Active, (01454) 261058 or sales@outdoor-active.co.uk

- Outdoor Active offer a 10 per cent discount to Canoe England members.

Lough Erne Canoe Trail

Celebrates victory in Waterways Renaissance Awards 2008



The Lough Erne Canoe Trail has triumphed in the 'Innovation' category at this year's Waterways Renaissance Awards, run by The Waterways Trust and BURA (British Urban Regeneration Association).

For the first time in the award's history, a project based in Northern Ireland was the recipient of an accolade. The Lough Erne Canoe Trail was recognised alongside projects organising ferry trips along the Mersey, the strengthening of a working lock in Keadby, North Lincolnshire and a waterside education programme on a Fenland river, Cambridgeshire, as some of the best examples of waterway renewal in the country.

Now in their sixth year, the Waterways Renaissance Awards aim to recognise best practice in sustainable waterway regeneration and development throughout the UK. The winners of the ten categories were announced at a prestigious awards ceremony and

dinner, which took place at the Imperial War Museum North in Manchester on the 12th March 2008. The event was hosted by Jim Hancock, former BBC Political Editor and presenter of BBC News North West.

The nominations were judged by an independent assessment panel, comprising waterway, conservation and regeneration experts and chaired by Sir Neil Cossons who said, *"The panel has no doubt that this is a truly innovative and inspirational project that has taken the simple idea of a canoe trail and successfully marketed it to promote the Lough Erne waterways as a whole. The involvement of canoeists in its design means the trail is both practical and attractive for users from around Ireland and beyond. It is a model that could be adapted and used elsewhere to encourage the use of waterways."*

The 50km Lough Erne Canoe Trail stretches from Muckcross on Lower Lough Erne to Crom in Upper Lough Erne. Launched in May 2005, the trail has gone from strength to strength attracting avid canoeists from all over the world. The trail was developed by the Countryside Access and Activities Network (CAAN) for Northern Ireland and the Canoe Association of Northern Ireland with financial support from Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (Inland Waterways Division), Environment and Heritage Service, Fermanagh District Council and the EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation. The project also received support from The National Trust and Waterways Ireland. In her acceptance speech Clare Wright – Strategic Access Manager, CAAN stated *"...we are absolutely delighted to win this award and to gain UK wide recognition for our work. This project was developed by a small team within a limited budget therefore Innovation was at the forefront of our planning and development throughout."*

The Lough Erne Canoe Trail has acted as a template for four other canoe trails in Northern Ireland. The Blackwater Canoe Trail was launched in November 2007, Lower Bann in February 2008 with Lough Neagh and Strangford Lough coming on-line in 2008. More information is available on www.canoeni.com.

New web site

The BCU Lifeguards are pleased to announce the launch of their brand new web site that went live in January 2008.

The new web site contains up-to-date information on awards and events from BCU Lifeguards. We have also launched our e-updates service that visitors can sign up for, allowing them to get updates and news directly into their email inboxes, straight from BCU Lifeguards. If you wish to receive e-updates, please visit the new web site at www.bculifeguards.org.uk

Upper Severn Canoe Rally



9th-11th May
A weekend of great paddling down Britain's longest river through wild and unspoilt countryside. The Rally brings

together one of the biggest gatherings of open canoeists in the UK. The 2007 rally turned out to be one of the wettest on record but despite the downpour a large number of hardy souls still completed the distance. Hopefully 2008 will not be so unkind! Join us for Rally No. 22 and paddle 34 miles from Pool Quay to Shrewsbury to see what the River Severn has to offer.

For further information contact:
Drummond Outdoor, South View, 8 Severn Bank, Shrewsbury, SY1 2JD. Tel: 01743 365022
Email: info@docanoe.com www.docanoe.com



Chairman of the Yorkshire region seen during secret trials of the latest pilot course.

Dick Constable was later quoted as saying that he had cracked the flat water 1 to 3 Star awards in a day, but that the New 4 Star white water award may need another couple of hours. He went on to say that *"the main problem was trimming the boat, as the iron lung wasn't balanced by the MRI Scanner, meaning the paddler had to constantly manually adjust the rudder whilst edging to assist straight running"*.

44

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Nestle promotional activity

As part of an Easter promotional activity, Nestle are offering customers who buy their Kit Kat Easter eggs, the opportunity to experience a sport/recreational activity.

Included in this promotional activity is canoeing via clubs.

The BCU/Canoe England have not received any communication from Nestle asking if we/clubs want to take part.

Nestlé's customer care team have said that letters went out to canoe clubs regarding the promotional activity and if clubs did not respond, Nestle took that to mean that clubs wanted to participate in the promotion!

To see if your canoe club is included in the promotional activity visit the Nestle web site www.nestlepromotions.co.uk/eastergiftcertificate/kitkat/index.aspx

To remove your club from the Nestle promotional activity web site, call the customer care team on 0870 4460457.

The BCU/Canoe England will be making a written formal complaint about this matter.

Warwickshire Demo Day

On 11th May 2008, Brookbank will be holding their first of two free demo days in May. It will take place in the grounds of their Warwickshire premises on the private lake.

Last year over 300 people turned up to get the best advice from manufacturers and try out boats. This is the ideal opportunity to test as many boats as you like if you are considering buying or if you have friends or family who want to try it out for the first time. There will be qualified coaches on hand for tips and advice and there will be courses available for flat water introductions to canoeing and kayaking. www.brookbankadventure.co.uk or call 01926 640573

Canoe expo success

The Brookbank team want to say a huge thank you to every one who came to Canoe expo and supported them in their crazy venture. The feedback from almost everyone who came has been positive, from the exhibitors who worked incredibly hard to keep to the tight deadlines Brookbank set to the visitors who they could not have managed without.

Werner paddle upgrade

Werner Paddles is halting shipping and production of the Werner Rio 4-Piece paddle. In field conditions where the paddle is exposed to extreme heat and humidity it may swell, causing an imperfect fit between the blades and the shaft. Although such incidents are extremely rare, the Rio 4-piece is intended to be used as a back-up paddle which functions perfectly every time. We are requesting that paddlers contact System X for an upgrade to Sherpa Straight Glass 4pc (RRP £229.95). info@systemxkayak.co.uk

April volunteer focus

Across the country, volunteers are making outstanding commitments to paddlesport. Without the coaches, officials, committee members, administrators and helpers the sport could not exist as it does today. A special thanks goes to all volunteers and this section provides the opportunity for clubs, centres and committees to say a special thanks to their volunteers.

Name: Kathrin Weber Oakwood Youth Club

Local award presentations have been taking place throughout the country giving the opportunity for clubs and centres to honour those volunteers in paddlesport who deserve additional recognition. For Kathrin Weber, her award was not only deserved, but kept a big secret right until the presentation by her fellow club members.

Her dedication and big surprise was revealed at the Salford Sports Awards, where Kathrin was honoured with 'Volunteer of the Year' for the district in recognition of her coaching in the outdoor pursuits section. Receiving her award from Mark Dutton, chairman of Salford Sports Council, Kathrin is now being put forward to represent Salford in the Greater Manchester Awards.

Kathrin's outstanding work as a volunteer at Oakwood Youth Club in Greater Manchester, is increasingly worthy of recognition through the sessions she provides for children with physical and learning disabilities.

Not only does Kathrin coach individuals of all abilities on the lake at the weekly sessions, she



Many thanks to all the volunteers in paddlesport. Let Canoe England know about volunteers in your area for the chance for them to be recognised in Canoe Focus and receive a special gift of thanks. Email volunteers@bcu.org.uk or write to the Volunteer Coordinator, British Canoe Union, 18 Market Place, Bingham, Nottingham NG13 8AP.

helps fellow club coach Stephen Swallow with river trips and visits throughout the year across the region.

Her dedication doesn't stop there – Kathrin supports the young members on many events from bellboat to sprint racing competitions and helps coach young people through the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme on residential weekends to the Lake District. Her main passion is water polo where Kathrin coaches the junior team who reached the final of the annual North West Christmas event.

Her ultimate commitment to the club showed when supporting the clubs work towards gaining the BCU community Top Club award last year, and did not go unnoticed by fellow club member and coach, Stephen Swallow: "Kathrin's support in making this award achievable for the club was immeasurable."

Directory 2008 changes/updates

Approved centres
Girlguiding UK – Blackland Farm
www.blacklandfarm.org.uk should be added to the list of approved centres.

Clubs
Lancaster and District Canoe Club (p49)
Graham Liddy has resigned from the post of secretary of Lancaster and District Canoe Club. Could all future mailings be sent to the new secretary Peter Brookes, Ashrigg, Denny Beck, Lancaster info@lancastercanoecub.org.uk. The club chair can be contacted on - daviddavid127@msn.com

Winchester and District Canoe Club (p53)
Winchester & District CC has the name of the new chairman – Dave Mackay but with the wrong email

address and phone number. Secretary Mrs Zoe Bell enquiries@winchestercanoeclub.org.uk Tel 02380 618989.

Contracted Course Provider
Cumbria (p110)
Andy Oxley, please NOTE the telephone number is incorrect, it should be H/W: 017687 76366 Mobile: 07813 667441.

Local River Advisor for River Itchen –
It is no longer Antony Morris. The position is vacant.

Local River Advisor for the River Lyn (p82)
Should read – East Lyn – Peter Thorn peter@peterthorn7.co.uk
Local River Advisor for the River Lune Lower (p 82)
Patricia Green is the contact for the River Lune Lower,

Below Kirkby Lonsdale. The contact name and postal address are correct, but the email address is incorrect. The correct email is patricia.green@btinternet.com

Local River Advisor for the Norfolk Broads Eastern and Yare above Reedham (p90)
The telephone number listed in River and Coastal Information Service section under both Norfolk Broads Eastern (P. 83) and Yare above Reedham (P. 90) is an ex-directory number and should not be used. Members can ring Chris Wright on 07711 584953.

South West Development team
Peter Thorn is listed as Vice Chair and the email address should be peter@peterthorn7.co.uk

South West Development Team – Disciplines – Slalom (p55)
Sue Trollope has sadly passed away. Ken Trollope is now the contact on 01794 323 411 canoeken@hotmail.com 41 Brookfields, West Wellow, Romsey, SO51 6GS.

Yorkshire Development team – Coaching RCO (p63)
Ian Scott has moved, the address is c/o 43 Dorset St, Sheffield, S10 2FW.

Apologies to the Outdoor Adventure Group for omitting their entry, contact details:
Club Secretary: Margaret Forrest, 4 Clarence Avenue, Knott End on Sea, Poulton le Fylde, FY6 0AH. Email – Margaret.forrest8@btopenworld.com www.oag.me.uk

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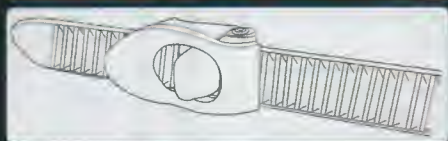
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DRAIN BUNG 10



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Walking with S

Chris Scott asked *"Why doesn't anyone paddle around Shark Bay, Jeff? It seems ideal for beginners like us."*

"Name puts them off I reckon," he replied. *"It's famous for big tiger sharks; National Geographic made a documentary there once."*

"Oh really?" I said. *"I thought it was just a name..."*

I had just flown in to Perth, Western Australia (WA) from London and together with Jeff's girlfriend Sharon we'd hit the road for the 1,000km drive to Shark Bay. Jetlag meant I was conveniently alert for the overnight drive. The sun rose as we rolled into Denham, Shark Bay's only settlement. Our plan was to paddle north from Denham about 60kms to the tip of the Peron Peninsula, round Cape Peron to the east and cover the same distance south to Monkey Mia Dolphin Resort.

There was no fresh water on our route and even the townfolk of Denham paid a premium for desalinated drinking water. So after breakfast we followed a network of 4x4 tracks to the tip of Cape Peron, our halfway point, to stash a cache of water and snacks. Jeff and Sharon had a Perception tandem the size of a Great White but, as I was about to find out, it didn't take much to swap my Gumotex inflatable.

To the big lagoon

With our cache stashed, we set off from Denham at dawn the following day. The waters were soothingly calm but soon a north-westerly sprung up, obliging us to dig in for what was to be two-and-a-half days. We got stuck in, buoyed up by the sighting of the extraordinarily rich marine life that gives Shark Bay its UNESCO world heritage status. A green turtle passed beneath our bows and later, as we towed our boats through the knee-deep shallows half a mile off shore by way of a break, manta rays took flight as if shot from a bow.

Our destination that day was the intriguing Big Lagoon which probed the peninsula's flank like a tidal glove. Though we'd snacked on some oysters during our afternoon wade, the hard paddling had given us all an appetite so we pulled in among some mangroves for an overdue feed and then scooted across the channel to the nearest sandy beach to make camp.

Walking with sharks

Dawn brought the tide right to our feet and we glided across the mirrored lagoon. It was a rare pleasure watching our boats speed silently over the seabed; out in the open the north-westerly was waiting for us. Heads down, we worked our way up the coast, occasionally man-hauling the kayaks again. Tiny fish skimming over the surface alerted us to the distinctive tail and dorsal fins chasing them. Soon metre-long sharks began darting between our boats, racing at us then veering off at the last minute in a flurry of spray. At one point Sharon ended up running towards the



beach screaming as the sharklets circled her menacingly, homing in for a nip.

Presently the waters cleared and we hopped back into the kayaks, steering out into the wind around sandbanks as a line of ochre-red cliffs many kilometres long passed by. As they ended we hauled the boats ashore and with daylight to spare, wandered off to explore the beach.

Cape Peron

Up with the sun again, but there was no calm put-in this morning. It would be another tough haul to reach Cape Peron and our cache. By 9am Jeff estimated it was blowing at 20 knots.

"What's that in English?" I yelled. *"About 30 clicks!"*

"At one point Sharon ended up running towards the beach screaming as the sharklets circled her menacingly, homing in for a nip"

harks

Was it possible to paddle against 30kph? My gumboat flexed with the swell as the sea surged over the sides. Still, every vicious headwind has a silver lining and a pair of dolphins popped up to say hello.

Two days of hard paddling had toned me up and I felt confident I could face the day's toil. After breaching a gnarly reef to grab another snack on the south end of Broadhurst Bight, we set off to cross to the northern edge, a punishing two-hour marathon with confused seas barging at us from all sides. Tying on to Jeff's stern I'd pump out regularly while the distant shore inched steadily by. The once comforting seabed was now an unfathomable inky blue abyss.

We staggered onto the sandy headland, having covered just 5kms. Our morning's efforts had put us just a couple of clicks from the tip of Cape Peron and sure enough, just forty minutes later, with my boat swilling with seawater, we managed to land and retrieve our cache.

Stuffing our faces and now with plenty of water, we were keen to round the Cape because at last the wind would out of our face! We pushed out and once rafted up, Jeff hoisted his secret weapon: a sail that filled instantly with a satisfying slap. Soon we were skimming along at two or three times our paddling speeds, water lapping over our bows, southeast into Herald Bight.



4x4 to Cape Peron



Cliff camp



Red cliffs



Ray



Towing the boats



The Gumo



By dusk our unexpected run downwind had doubled our day's mileage. Once ashore I foraged for firewood while Sharon and Jeff got cooking. As we wolfed down our food wafts of a gorgeous aroma drifted over from the fire. Intrigued, I walked over and realised one especially large chunk was sandalwood. A century ago WA had got rich supplying this raw material for incense to nearby Asia. Now the last reserves in WA were said to be in Shark Bay. We pulled the log off, finished off the meal and with the wind still blasting down the bight, retreated to our tents.

Across Hopeless Reach

By the time we'd dried out following an overnight storm the tide had come in to meet us again and under sail we windsurfed round into Hopeless Reach. Here, prophetically, the wind dropped and it was back to good old-fashioned paddling, albeit on much calmer seas.

Sailing with Dugongs

We were sitting back, enjoying chatting without yelling when Sharon exclaimed "Dugongs!!" Several huge dun-coloured profiles soon emerged against the dark seagrass bank on which they were feeding and before long we were right among a herd of twenty sea cows, caught unawares by our stealthy windborne raft. At times our bows nearly ran over them, the water ahead exploding as their powerful tail flukes blasted them out of range.

By mid-afternoon we could see Cape Rose a few kilometres from Monkey Mia resort and so strung out the day with fruitless fishing and exploring the scrubby cliff tops on foot.

As we approached Monkey Mia next morning bottlenosed dolphins cruised past, soon followed by a tourist catamaran and the commotion of the resort. We beached the boats one last time and while Jeff hitched back to Denham to get the van another ranger-led dolphin visitation ensued. Sure it's fun seeing a dolphin close up but the three of us couldn't help feeling rather smug about our thrilling encounters out in the Bay. The tourists were standing ankle deep with half-tame dolphins but we'd worn the paint off our paddle shafts, sailed with sea cows and walked with sharks! ●

CHRIS SCOTT

Trucks, tanks

THE FOUR BORDERS EXPEDITION 07 Majoy Cascade

It's six months since the selection event; six months of emails, letters, phone calls; six months of begging and pleading; but most of all, six months of anticipation and excitement for this day – the first river of the British Universities Kayaking Expedition 2007, the warm-up river of the Four Borders Expedition. And right now, in this eddy... I just want to be home with a cup of cocoa and my feet up in front of the TV! Six months of intense planning and we chose this as a warm up! A large volume Grade 5 inescapable gorge?

According to Russian rafters, if you succeed in Majoy Cascade, you prove yourself masters of your sport. This was the psyche up speech of our excited translator...

Why oh why did we have to prove ourselves so early on? Why oh why did we have to prove ourselves at all?

With Igor's words still ringing in my head, (and no other option) I left the makeshift comfort of the eddy. Here goes...

Light was dimming at the end of the day but after negotiating rapids such as 'The Touchy Person' and 'The Kiddie', with one swim, one dented boat and one lost pair of blades we rounded the corner and there was the truck. The beastly ex-military vehicle was waiting for us. A huge surge of relief and satisfaction rushed through my veins. Forget that cup of cocoa. This is where I wanted to be! The 'Touchy Person' had broken us into Siberian water!

The difference between paddling a small British ditch and a large Siberian gorge is fairly major, so getting into difficulties had to be expected. Hence



(L to r): Graham Milton, and Dave Burne on the Majoy Cascade. Photo: Lowri Davies

we were prepared when Sean had a sketchy moment at the bottom of one of the main, named rapids and swam. With the 'Touchy Person' behind him, we managed to pull him off before he entered 'The Kiddie' - a huge river wide hole.

In retrospect paddling a big volume river was a good method of getting everyone comfortable on big volume water. There was much more of it to come. But in the meantime...

Mongolia

The Mongolian leg was always going to be a huge risk for the expedition. Despite extensive research we had found no information on any rivers in the country

and no promising leads. This really was exploratory boating – a big gamble.

From what we could find out pre-expedition there was a 'rainy' season, which lasted... ooooo a good two weeks. And to add to that, this season usually showed up anytime between mid-July and late August!

Mongolia is basically a desert... and we were going kayaking there... awesome... "Who's idea was this again?"

Things didn't start well. The border crossing was... interesting shall we say. Our truck was forbidden from going across the 30km of aptly named 'no man's land' between the Russian and Mongolian border points, and our translator had to leave. Things weren't looking good. After being stuck at the border point for a day it was decided that the best thing we could do would be to get up early and hitch across to Mongolia, with all our kit, and our boats. With the use of the international language of sign, and a few

Bummer! Shrinkavision strikes again. But once you're in, there is no escape from the Majoy cascade - double bumper! Sitting in an eddy above any difficult rapid is always a nervous experience, but after watching three of your friends casually getting tossed about (upright and upside-down) like decapitated heads at a chicken factory above what can most simply be described as '300m of mess', it's worse. Oooooh yes, much worse! Triple bumper! Dave Burne is a little concerned!



Graham Milton



Patrick Clissold



Ben Bedingham



Lowri Davies



Tank



Sarot

and kayaking

SIBERIA AND MONGOLIA



Sean Zeim-Stephen



Tom Hunter



Dave Burne



Paul Sherman

hundred Tengals we were across. Eight boats on six roof rackless vehicles, with fraying rope and even string to hold things down. But it was never going to be that smooth!

I was the last member to leave Russia and was relieved to see the gang waiting for on the other side of the fence in Mongolia, but my relief was short lived. As soon as the gate opened the wheels started to screech. Suddenly we lurched forward, swerving to narrowly miss a border official, and then another, on the thin dust road. We were away. Stopping for no one and nothing. But what was going on? Why was my passport still with the border guard? 200m (and rapidly counting) away from our truck? Was I being kidnapped? Why hadn't I taken more notice of Indiana Jones's 'jumping from a moving vehicle' technique?

Turns out we had hitched across with alcohol smugglers doing their booze cruise in preparation for the Nadam festival! There are some things the international language of signs can't prepare you for!

We chose our target river and the next day we we're away, hopes high that there would be a nice bedrock creek or two flowing into a couple of huge lakes. Our translator Sarol did not seem too optimistic after speaking to some local villagers. *"The river is too shallow, there is not enough water, and it needs to rain"* Sarol said. Undeterred, we felt after the drive the least we could do would be to check it out ourselves. After a long hike up the river, it was obvious that, although there was

some water, the valley was too wide for anything of great interest.

And that is basically the story of the majority of Mongolia! With the exception of a spectacular and cultural two-day Grade 3 trip, for the next two weeks, our optimistic search in the Mongolian Altai was dealt regular blows, *"No water here"*; *"No rain since last wet season"*; *"Too dry"*... we had come in the middle of the country's worst drought in 20 years. A drought, in a desert... not the best combination for a kayaker!

But then came an inspiration. A tip off from Chris, our man in the know, suggested that we ditch the detailed smaller scaled maps and go back to the drawing board. A mere three-day drive east across remote desert and we would come to a range of mountains which had *"the potential to possibly have some glacier fed rivers"*. We were sold... we were desperate! This was our one last attempt to find a river we could paddle.

Ben Bedingham hiking to Kohroo Mong.
Photo: Paul Sherman



The gamble button was pressed... and the gamble button delivered!

After the disappointment of the previous weeks what we found was beyond the imagination of any of us. A near perfect creek with large drops, steep slides and crystal clear water. After a good four-hour walk-in with the boats over a mountain, the day started off with an impressive triple drop. More sections of quality white water followed with some clean drops and smooth slides, earning the river the name mini Brandset, after the Norwegian classic. The river finished off by flowing through a very scenic gorge, after which it was



Sean Zeilm-Stephen (top) and Graham Milton Kikure walk out.
Photo: Paul Sherman



Ger, Mongolia. Photo: Lowri Davies



Nachim Festival, Olgii, Mongolia.
Photo: Lowri Davies



Sean Zeilm-Stephen and Tom Hobbs loading up a bus in Mongolia.
Photo: Lowri Davies



Sean Zeilm-Stephen, Dave Burne, Kohroo, Mongolia.
Photo: Paul Sherman



Mongolia. Photo: Paul Sherman



Russian truck. Photo: Lowri Davies

We finally deduced that we must be ahead of the others, so found a camping ground up on a small cliff and waited... and waited... and waited... and – then we heard it! Sharp blasts from a whistle in the distance. The boat we hung from the cliff as a marker had done its job marvellously.

But what was this? Only three people appeared around the corner... something was definitely wrong! Three people, four boats. Action stations! We ran down from the cliff and grabbed the nearest throw lines we could. But it was too late as they had already passed us. Trying to keep up we ran along the rocky bank, buzzing with adrenaline. After a few sketchy moments, and one throw bag down, the dented boat was recovered, and everyone on the bank. Everyone except Lowri.

It turned out that after inspecting a nasty rapid 3km upstream Lowri had slipped and dropped the boat. In a steep sided canyon with steep skree sides, she was in for an interesting walk. It was only a couple of hours before dark, and knowing she had no food, shelter or warm clothing, we had to move fast... never before have whistles been so essential.

Only now could the relief set in. For the first time since Tank and Igor dropped us off, all eight of us were together again, listening to Lowri's wide-eyed account of her epic traverse along the top of the skree sloped gorge. From this point it would have taken over a week to walk out over the mountains.

The boat chase had been made more challenging not only due to the sparse number of eddies on the river, but also because the river was, it turned out, pretty high. Another two days of pushy Grade 4 with the odd strainer to avoid, and with regular rendezvous points



Lowri Burne, Kohroo, Mongolia.
Photo: Patrick Clissold



Ben Bedingham, Russia.
Photo: Paul Sherman

swallowed up by another river at a confluence where we camped. Our first first-descent of the trip! Now all we had to look forward to is getting back into Russia!

Karagem/Argot

Our driver, Tank, really is a machine. Throughout the night, while we all slept (or at least tried to) in the back of his truck, he was driving us up over the 3,000m rocky Karagem pass. Two bottles of vodka (straight, naturally) later, and with dawn breaking, he pulled up at the get-on – a small rocky tributary to the Karagem River. We decided to split into two groups of four and set off...

Unfortunately, there was a 'minor' communication hiccup. One group took the high road on a path up and around the tree infested ditch, the other took the low and battled through the strainers. A day and a half later with only vague theories as to where the respective groups were, we were eventually reconciled. The relief had to wait for later though.

For more information about our trip, visit www.fourbordersexpedition.com
We would like to thank Palm, Pyranha and the BCU Expeditions Committee for all their help, and also all the other trusts, organisations and countless people who helped us along the way.
Dave Burne



Kohroo, Mongolia.
Photo: Patrick Clissold



Paul Sherman, Kohroo, Mongolia.
Photo: Patrick Clissold



Tom Hunter, Khovd River, Monty
Photo: Paul Sherman



Argut-Katun conf, Russia. Photo: Patrick Clissold

we reached the confluence of the river Argot. If one was to describe the Karagem as a large volume river "a bit on the high side", the Argot could then only be described as a huge brown torrent. What's more, after the 25km of 'flat water' down from the confluence we knew the Argot gorged up... big style! It was the calm before the storm.

The intimidating pushy rapids were long with some being several kilometres in length. The waves were huge and there were enormous holes to navigate between. As the rainy days went on the river got even bigger as it flowed through some beautiful gorges, into boxed canyons and must-run rapids. When the Argot finally flowed into the Katun, it was time to relax and reflect on the epic run that we had just had; with many highs and lows, all on an immensely intimidating, challenging, wilderness multi-day river trip. The hardest boating most of us had ever done.

Chulyshman

The drive to the get on may have been far less remote and difficult to that of the Karagem/Argut run, but some things were strikingly similar. For a start, we were driving in the dead of night. This is a bonus as it prevents the engine from overheating as much. However, when things go wrong, (take having your truck fall through a bridge for example...) it does make things much trickier.

So the Chulyshman – what a river! For anyone paddling in the Altai this is a must! There's no chance of a warm up though! You're straight into the one of the major rapids – Devil's Bridge. A must make boof into a boiling

retentive pool where live bait is only possible if you have um... lots of courage!

After 'Rosie's House' (a 5m waterfall) came the rapid where the most interesting lines were taken.

I myself was unsure of running the rapid from the start, so decided to use Ben, Graham and Sean as probes. Three different lines were taken, three different mistakes were made. I had all the information I needed – now all I had to do was select the best combination of lines. Learning from other people's mistakes is definitely the way forward!

After only one night we had completed the section. The next morning, Patrick and Sherman (having recovered from some dodgy sishlick) joined us for a two-day stunning continuous Grade 4 paddle until we reached the truck, where Tank and Igor were waiting with beer, vodka, and BBQ.

Bashkaus

This river has been described in many ways. Three of my favourites being "One of the most difficult and committing gorges on the former USSR", "Like Siberia's anus. When it rains, the sphincter is unhappy and closes up, and the backlog goes all the way to the neck", "Tomorrow we paddle the Bashkaus, if it rains, we risk our lives." Basically, this river was a serious undertaking. The first people to raft this river noted 127 obstacles before they even reached the first major rapid - the Key. But the thing we were most worried about were not the rapids, it was the rain. Our Russian friends had soberingly made what turned out to be a fatal error in getting on the river during a rainstorm only the week before. Fortunately for us there was clear blue sky all around. We could only hope it would stay that way. With all the hype about this immense spectacular gorge it was an intimidating few days. However we had been blessed with fine weather and low water levels. 'The Family', the 'Meatgrinder' and the 'Stubborn' were all successfully navigated. Before we knew it, we had reached the lake, caused by a huge landslide, which marked the end of the difficult section. A sigh of relief

was breathed, we were out of the gorge, but this was still not the time to relax. There was one last major obstacle to overcome. The 'Landslide Rapid'. There were two options:

1. Take on the long scree slope portage, or
2. Test your mettle.

Every other group who had previously paddled this river had opted for the former, with the exception of two Bublicks (a crazy Russian raft). Would we break the mould? The conditions were perfect. We had no other information about how successful the previous rafters were. There were no previous kayakers to question... After an hour of inspecting, a rescue helicopter flew overhead, reminding Graham and myself that this river has taken more than just a couple of casualties in its time, and we weren't ready to be at risk of being the next... just yet. Though a seed has definitely been planted.

The three to five day gorge had been navigated in just the two. That night as we huddled under the wooden road bridge waiting for the trucks arrival the next day, a deafening roar of thunder cracked directly overhead. The heavens opened and we were engulfed in a most immense thunderstorm. We had got out just in time!

With Sean and Sherman both graduating and back off to their jobs, it was decided since we had a few weeks to spare, Kazakhstan was the place to go. We'll save that story for another time though...

So that was the FBE 07!

But to leave you I will use an immortal quote from Igor 'the Bod' which I believe sums up the trip perfectly: "Zis, is 98% medical Etanol. But do not worry! Wben react wiz air, is only 97%. ...SALABIZIMA!"

DAVE BURNE



Ben Bedingham, Mazoy, Russia. Photo: Paul Sherman

Athlete Focus



Andy Daniels

Although Andy Daniels is only 19-years-old, he is one of the top GB paddlers in marathon and flat water racing. Andy competes nationally and internationally as part of the GB squad in both sprint and marathon. In 2007 he became double

national champion in K1 (kayak single) and K2 (kayak double).



More about Andy...

HOW DID YOU FIRST BECOME INVOLVED IN KAYAKING?

I followed my family into canoeing. There was also a good local flat water club locally – Reading Canoe Club and I got involved there (see more below).

WHAT IS IT ABOUT THE SPORT THAT YOU LIKE SO MUCH?

I have had the chance to visit many countries and to compete against their best paddlers. I have seen how the events get bigger and better the higher you can achieve. I have seen how many people it takes, all working hard, to make a great event happen. I am learning what it takes to compete in these events and I am very pleased and proud to be part of it all.

WHEN DID YOU WIN YOUR FIRST RACE?

It has to be a divisional Hasler race div 9 in summer time. It was four miles long, there was no portage and no pressure – it was great fun!

WHY HAVE YOU CHOSEN FLAT-WATER RACING AND NOT ANY OTHER OF THE CANOEING DISCIPLINES?

Well I have been exposed to flat-water racing through my dad and brother Tom, so it just followed naturally. Marathon racing occurs almost every weekend and I started going to lots of races and started training to work my way up the divisions. It has not been all flat-water though in the literal sense. I can remember a trip to Scotland for their race series which included some races on Loch Lomond and the River Tay. Paddling K boats down quite big rapids like Thistlebrig is confidence building and great fun. In 2006 my bother Tom and I won the Exe Descent in the Senior K2, this surprised some of the experienced-paddlers that a couple of 'sprint boys' proved capable. It's a great shame this race is in danger of disappearing from the marathon calendar

Attending National Regattas with my club and being part of the World Class Start Programme made me realise that sprint racing was an Olympic discipline and that the support was there to go all the way. At times canoeing is hard, just ask any paddlers on the water in January when it's freezing cold and icy. However, paddling in the summer at my local club – it's a beautiful place to be and incredibly sociable at grass roots and I wouldn't want to be training anywhere else.

YOU RACED AS A SENIOR IN THE MARATHON WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS IN GYOR HUNGARY AND HAD A GOOD COMPETITIVE RACE... HOW DID YOU FEEL ABOUT BEING IN A PACK OF THREE WITH THE TWO SPANISH GUYS WORKING TOGETHER?

I couldn't believe my luck to be competing head to head with the best guys in the world, these guys are heroes of the sport. Racing them was hard but I did better than I even thought possible. To be in with a chance of medalling at elite level in my debut senior event was a fantastic benchmark for me and I can only hope to improve on that next year and beyond.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BEST RACE TO DATE AND WHY?

It has to be finishing 7th at the World Sprint Championships in 2007 at Belgrade in the K4 200m event. That was as fast as canoeing ever gets and we made a world class A final. Before that it was the World Marathon Championships in 2005 Perth, Australia, and in 2006 in Tremolat, France, gaining a silver medal in K2 at each event with Alan Spencer and Stuart Hastings respectively. Becoming double National Champion in K1 and K2 with Ed Cox in 2007 was pretty awesome too.

WHAT ELSE DO YOU DO IN YOU LIFE OTHER THAN CANOEING?

I am a full time student in High Wycombe studying video production and a full time athlete at the National Academy at Bisham Abbey. Having to eat healthily and get plenty of rest and sleep, doesn't leave a lot of time for anything else. My girlfriend and I go to the cinema in our free time, but I would like to make some time to learn to ski.

ARE YOU NATURALLY COMPETITIVE?

Oh yes, I think I get it from having an older brother. Board games at our house never go down well!

WHAT IS THE HIGHLIGHT OF YOUR CAREER SO FAR?

Being Youth Olympic gold medallist in Sydney 2007, winning there in the K2 1000m was fantastic. The praise I got from people was huge and it gave me more drive and commitment to winning at the summer Olympics games.

Vital Statistics

Born: 1988
Coach: Steve Harris
Marital status: Single
Occupation: Full time student and athlete
Class: Flat water
Club: Reading CC

Career Highlights:

National Championships 2007: Men's K1 champion
National Championships 2007: Men's K2 champion with Ed Cox
National Championships 2006: Junior Men's K1 champion
National Champion in U14, U16 and U18 levels in sprint and marathon

WHAT HAVE BEEN THE TOUGHEST MOMENTS AND HOW DO YOU KEEP YOURSELF MOTIVATED?

The toughest moments have to be the early mornings in cold weather, but all of the GB team motivate one another to get on the river and train hard.

WHAT IS IN THE PIPELINE FOR 2008?

I am aiming for Olympic qualification at the European Championships in Milan in April. Plus a medal in the Czech Republic for the Marathon World Championships would be good. I was recently at a ten week training camp in Seville, Spain where we were trying every combination, amongst the squad paddlers, to achieve the fastest crew in K2.

The goal is to qualify a K2 at the European Championships in Milan 2008 for the Olympics. This does not necessarily mean that the paddlers who qualify the boat will go to the Olympics, just that GB has qualified a K2 for the Olympic games. The fastest crew at the time of the competition will ultimately be the crew that attends the Olympics.

WHAT IS A TYPICAL TRAINING DAY LIKE?

It's a 6:15am breakfast then down to Dorney Regatta Lake by 7:30 for an hour session. Then I am off to university till lunch time then home for lunch and any meetings I may have with coaches or support staff before training again at 4pm which could be another paddle or a run, gym or swim.

WHO IS/ARE YOUR GREATEST SUPPORTERS?

It has to be the family first, but thanks also go to the world class system for their excellent support as well as the BCU for the structure they have put in place for us athletes. The support at club level from my local club, Reading and from other clubs in all regions have always been very encouraging.

WHAT IS YOUR ULTIMATE GOAL IN THE SPORT?

I like everyone else in team GB strive to achieve my maximum potential, but my ultimate goal is to race and win a medal at an Olympic games.

WHICH CLUB IS YOUR BASE AND HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN THERE?

Initially I started canoeing with my family at Reading Canoe Club. Some weekends my brother and I (aged nine) attended junior training days at Elmbridge Canoe Club where Roland and Di Lawler were very encouraging. My senior school was on the other side of town, so I started paddling at the then new Wokingham Canoe Club with Duncan Blythe, who coached me along with others such as Paul Ralph and Richard Lovell and I received a great deal of support from this club.

Having joined the World Class Start program, I returned to Reading CC under the guidance of Dave Coulson, Junior National Coach and I attended West Thames Regional training weekends with Trevor Wetherall. I now race nationally for Reading CC.

I was invited to live at the National Sports Academy in Bisham Abbey and train with the potential international and Olympic paddlers of the highest standard, such as Tim Brabants and National Coach Shaun Caven, along with the many support staff that help to run the World Class Programme. My coach is currently Steve Harris who is immensely passionate about our sport.

I still go back to Reading CC to paddle on the good water there. There is a really fun sociable atmosphere but also the option of professionalism to push anyone who wants to improve. I would put a lot of my success down to the truly top class training environments and all the support I have had from people that are dedicated to the sport. For instance, I can well remember Ivan Lawler sitting me down after capsizing just before the finishing line at the 2006 National Championships and showing me how to race more tactically, effectively telling me how to beat him!



THANK YOU ANDY FOR TAKING THE TIME TO GIVE THIS INTERVIEW.

Taking The Rough...



www.prijon.co.uk

Jean-luc Grossman
Hebride Islands

With The Smooth



www.prijon.co.uk

Jo Walkworth
Ilfracombe

Coaching

Rapid Education – Key concepts in WW kayaking

Let me tell you all something. White Water kayaking is actually a pretty uncomplicated sport. No really, it is. All you need to do is develop your understanding of the river environment and how we interact with it. If you manage this, your performance will improve drastically. However, trying to develop our understanding of the river and how we work with it is like trying to eat an elephant – If we try and gulp it down in one mouthful, it'll stick in our throats. Consequently, I've put together a series of articles, appearing over the coming issues, covering the key concepts we need to understand in order to become efficient and effective white-water kayakers. By BCU Coach Tom Parker.

Now, it'll help enormously in all of this if you understand what you already do when you are on the water. Under normal circumstances, you would have a coach nearby who would help you sort this out, but that won't be the case for this article, unless you go on a course, so you need to be able to critically analyse your own boating, to become your own coach. There's two main ways of doing this that we need to master – reflective practice and self-analysis:

Thinking about what you do
Back in the 80s, a chap called David Kolb, unveiled his 'Experiential Learning Theory'. The theory states that experience is the basis of learning and has four key stages:

- experience;
- reflection;
- abstract conceptualisation;
- experimentation

OR

- do;
- reflect;
- think;
- modify

This process should be an upward spiral of development, if you will but rarely is. Why? Because, as a nation, we are pretty poor at reflecting on the details of what we do. Countless times I see people nail a line or move and say "that was good" or, conversely, mess things right up and complain "that was rubbish". What did you do that made it good or bad? Why did it go well or less well? If you can get into the habit of analysing the details of what you do, you can keep the elements that work and change those that don't – leading to improvement!

Now we need to link back to developing our understanding of the river and our moves otherwise, reflection or not, all our efforts could be going in the wrong direction, so to speak...

Working out what you actually do

There are two broad ways of working out what you do at any given point on the river – holistically and deductively. Holistic analysis, from a coach's point of view, is how we spot obvious things that are leading to a dodgy performance. You tend to look at the whole picture and the answer becomes obvious. As an example, can you spot what the boater is doing wrong in this example (Photo 2)?



Working out what you actually do (Photo 2)

Now, holistic analysis is great for big, obvious actions and factors but when we are kayaking on white-water, our actions are normally more complicated – for example (photo 3)

We need to take more of a Sherlock Holmes approach – deductive analysis

When we analyse our actions deductively, we break down what we are doing into three smaller chunks – Body, Boat and Blade. The trick with using the '3Bs' is to see how much each of them are moving, both individually and in relation to each other. Getting the relative amounts of movement in each aspect right will result in the motion being the most efficient and effective.

Flags and markers

As coaches, when we analyse what someone is doing, we gauge their movement by using a system of flags and markers. In the following example (Photo 4), we can gauge how fast the boater is moving by seeing how quickly they move past the tree on the bank beyond them:

We also need to be able to gauge how much different parts of the body are moving in relation to each other and the boat. Now, at this point, you need to focus on certain parts of the body, generally the nose, shoulders, elbows and hands. Imagine a luminous glow coming from each of these, kind of like how they filmed the movements for 'Gollum' in Lord of the Rings. You also need a couple of these luminous marks on the boat; one roughly level with where the feet sit in the boat, and another on both the front and back of the buoyancy aid, high up and central (Photo 5).

In addition to this, you need to imagine a couple of luminous lines on the boat. One runs the length of the boat, dead centre, cutting the boat and boater in half. The other runs across the boat, just in front of the

Thinking about what you do





During the next month, get down the local lake or canal and run through your foundation skills. Break them down into the 3Bs and try to work out what you actually do, using flags and markers



Flags and markers (Photo 5 and 6 below)

in mind. Observing the shapes other people make will become easier with practice and experience.

The skill of analysing our own actions is also tricky and takes time to develop. During the next month, get down the local lake or canal and run through your foundation skills. Break them down into the 3Bs and try to work out what you actually do, using flags and markers. If you can get someone to video you, even better, as you can go over it again and again, relating what you actually do to what you have observed to be effective in others.

In the next Canoe Focus, we'll be looking at what is probably the most vital key concept in white-water boating – reading the river.

Take care folks. ●

TOM PARKER



Tom Parker – Coaching and Guiding offer high quality personal coaching at all levels, coupled with a comprehensive range of BCU and Rescue 3 courses.

Tom would like to thank Pyranha, Palm Equipment, System X and Smith Optics for all their support.

Working out what you actually do (Photo 3)

boater. Sounds complicated but this example (Photo 6) should help.

So now we have a set of markers to use on others and ourselves.

Marvellous! But how do they work?

Well, since we are analysing what movements we are making, look at the luminous points and see what shapes they draw during the action (if you have trouble imagining the marks, stick little bits of gaffer tape to where the marks should be).

Now comes the science bit (concentrate!) – is the shape we are seeing the one we should be seeing?

For example, when someone is paddling forward, the mark on the shoulder should move back and forth, drawing a line. If it isn't, why is that? Is it effective?

So how do we know what the shape should be? There isn't an easy answer to this one. Essentially, we need to understand how each stroke should work. If you are unsure, watch other skilled boaters, both in person and on videos, check out pictures in magazines and books (Chapter four in the BCU Handbook is a good place to start), always keeping these markers



Flags and markers (Photo 4)



Paul Owen

Chief Executive Officer

YOUR ROLE IN BCU AND WHAT YOU DO...

I am the Chief Executive of the British Canoe Union responsible for all staff and for the day to day operation of the organisation. This includes the membership activities of Canoe England and the high performance aims of GB canoeing from international teams through to our involvement with the Olympic Games. I am also the Accounting Officer for the BCU having special responsibility for all government investment.

HOW HAS THE BCU CHANGED IN YOUR TIME?

When I took over the role of Chief Executive there were twelve full or part-time employees. By this time next year there will be 120 full or part time employees. At the time I was the youngest ever Chief Executive of an Olympic National Governing Body so it has been exciting to grow with the sport. Sport has changed dramatically and so has canoeing, but it still provides fresh challenges.

WHAT DOES A TYPICAL DAY'S WORK INVOLVE?

It can involve anything. Often I plan for a day of work and then I get a telephone call and it all changes.

I could be abroad liaising with the International Canoe Federation (ICF) or working at an event such as the Olympics. I spend a lot of time in London at various meetings where they could be with UK Sport, Sport England, the government, the British Olympic Association or CCPR.

WHAT ARE THE THINGS YOU ENJOY THE MOST ABOUT YOUR ROLE?

The variety and the opportunity to make a real difference to peoples lives.

IS THERE ANYTHING YOU DISLIKE ABOUT YOUR ROLE?

I get very frustrated with people who don't make a positive contribution, criticism is fine and constructive, but people who just moan for the sake of it and do not add value to the sport I find very tiresome.

DO YOU PADDLE OR DO YOU PARTICIPATE IN ANY OTHER SPORTS?

I started to canoe when I was four with my family. My brother built my first canoe which I recently donated to the family next door to us. It was still in good working order! Nowadays I canoe occasionally with my daughter in an open canoe but seem to spend a considerable amount of time acting as support crew for my wife whilst she races. I guess I will be support crew for my daughter too as she wants to take up racing as well.

I really enjoy surfing and have just about mastered the art of standing up on the board. I also go mountain biking in the forest near to where I live.

Even though I may not take part in all sports I am a very keen follower of sport and in particular athletics, I suppose this goes back to when I was a national runner.

WHAT ARE YOUR INTERESTS OUTSIDE OF SPORT?

My family, photography.

WHAT PLACES HAVE YOU BEEN TO AS A RESULT OF YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN CANOEING?

All over the world, from Sydney to Acapulco and from China to the Arctic Circle.

YOUR VIEWS ON THE FUTURE OF THE SPORT...

I believe that canoeing in the UK has a fantastic future, it hits all of the buttons as a lifestyle sport and is attractive to so many different walks of life, providing so many opportunities, whether you want to be competitive or simply want to enjoy the scenery.

We now have a well established structure for the sport and it can continue to develop.

VIEW ON ACCESS ETC...

Frustrating though it may be I have no doubt that we will eventually achieve our aims.

I have tremendous admiration for everyone who works in this area as there is very little thanks/job satisfaction, however, in recent times we have come along way.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE CANOEING MOMENT?

So many, I have the honour of being present for all of our Olympic medals, seeing both Ivan Lawler and Anna Hemmings achieve multi world champion status.

A tremendous personal honour for me last year was to witness Tim Brabants win at the world championships, our first world champion at an Olympic sprint distance for over 20 years, and then to be part of the medal ceremony. I also find it special to see the look on the faces on kids who are just starting out, whether they want to compete or just enjoy paddling.

DID YOU DO ANY VOLUNTARY WORK IN CANOEING BEFORE YOU TOOK UP YOUR ROLE AS CHIEF EXECUTIVE?

I served on the BCU Marathon committee as PR Officer and Treasurer, I was responsible for the publicity of the Devizes to Westminster race during its heights in the 1980s and I have also been a regional secretary.

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO ADD?

I just love to meet every day with enthusiasm and feel that it's a great honour to work in this sport with so many talented people such as the BCU staff, volunteers and our athletes.

FINALLY CAN YOU GIVE ONE INTERESTING FACT ABOUT YOURSELF?

I was a runner 1500 and 800 metres. However, my career was ended when I badly broke my ankle running for a train. But before I finished my running career I did achieve a sub-four minute mile!

ANY PICTURES?

You have got to be joking!

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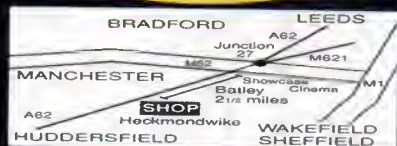
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Competition – slalom

British Olympic team trials 2008 – a guide

The prize

The year 2008 has held major significance in the lives of Britain's top canoe slalom athletes for several years. The Olympic Games is the pinnacle of their sport and a gold medal is the highest achievement any racer can aspire to. Since the closing ceremony in Athens 2004, preparations have been intense, focused and meticulous. The final leg of the journey to the Olympics starts on 12th April 2008. On that day will be the first of a three race series to decide who will pull on the Team GB equipment in Beijing. Read on for an insider's guide to the process.

The build-up

The BCU's World Class Olympic Programme for canoe slalom has pulled out all the stops over the past three years, with the aim of fielding a full team of world beating slalom paddlers at the Beijing Olympic Games 2008. Preparations have included foreign training camps to practice on the world's toughest race venues, physiology input to improve athletic capacity, physiotherapy to keep the athletes on the road and technique analysis to squeeze the vital fractions of a second from performances. All members of the GB team will have spent time getting to grips with the

Beijing course, so that in the event of their selection, they can hit the ground running at the Olympics themselves. Many members will have been to Australia, hoping that some warm weather training will have boosted their technique and power better than a chilly British winter.

All of this preparation will be put to the test at the most intense race on the road to the Olympics: the British Olympic team trials. Held over two weeks in the middle of April, the trials will bring forth the UK's quickest, toughest and most ambitious slalom athletes.

The system

The selection policy is actually quite complicated, but can be summarised as follows: the Olympic boat in each category will be selected on the strength of their best two out of three races. Two races will be held in Holland and one race in Nottingham. The 'non-counting' race (ie the race result which isn't used to calculate the result) is used as a tie breaker, so in close racing situations all the athletes will be hoping for solid results at all three races.

The contenders

Men's kayak single

In this category, racing will be extremely fierce with several quick boats in contention. Favourite in many people's minds will be the 2004 silver medallist, Campbell Walsh. He was third at last year's world championships and secured the UK's Olympic berth in this category. His awesome pace and consistency are a fearsome combination. A bookmaker would not rule out Richard Hounslow, fourth at the worlds last year. His form has been red-hot and people would say that the Dutch course favours his laid back style. Also a strong contender, Huw Swetnam finished just 1.1 seconds outside of the final at the worlds last year and will be pushing hard to gain some Olympic points. The pressure of Olympic selection can sometimes provide inspiration; both Andy Hadfield and Rob Neave could throw a spanner in the works if any of the favourites stumble.

Women's kayak single

Another absorbing duel is promised in this category. The 2006 world silver medallist, Fiona Pennie, is up against former Olympian Laura Blakeman. Both women are very quick on their day and there is not much to choose between them in terms of consistency. Fiona Pennie, seventh at the 2007 worlds, is supremely tough and aggressive on the water. Laura Blakeman will already know what it takes having been involved with two previous Olympic selection rounds in 2000 and 2004. Lizzie Neave has been struggling with injury over the winter and her recovery might come too late to contend, but Louise Donnington will be racing fearlessly to try and catch a dose of the Olympic fever.

Campbell Walsh
Photo: Rob Eytton Jones



Fiona Pennie
By David Leathborough



Laura Blakeman
By David Leathborough



Richard Hounslow
Photo: David Leathborough



Huw Swetnam
Photo: David Leathborough



The winning boat in a selection race scores 30 selection points, with second scoring 27 and third scoring 25, with fourth place being 24, fifth 23 points etc. This system rewards fast, aggressive race winning slalom runs.

Several of the Olympic hopefuls have bonus selection points secured at the 2007 World Championships in Brazil, but as things stand, these bonus points are unlikely to affect the final outcome of the series

The venues

The first two legs of Olympic Selection will be held at Dutch Water Dreams, Zoetermeer in Holland and the final leg at Holme Pierrepont, Nottingham.

The Dutch Water Dreams site is an extremely fast, powerful and unforgiving river. The riverbed was modelled to replicate the Beijing 2008 course. As such, it is perfect to test the best. There are two big drops on the course, with grabby holes to slow the unwary plus some quick, diagonal waves, which can easily push competitors into difficulties. The river flow is so quick that a slight positional

error can lead to significant time losses and so it will be a real test of nerve, skill and physical preparation. Although not a 'local' training venue for the British team, much time has been spent there over the winter period, learning the river and getting used to the facility.

Holme Pierrepont is where the British team is based; so all the athletes who are racing for the Olympic spots will be very familiar with the river and its features. This situation challenges the course designers to set a gate pattern that will separate the gems from the stones. The comparatively small size and low power of the river means that very difficult offset downstream gate sequences can be set, forcing extremely tight manoeuvres. Also, the critical upstream gates are always a test in Nottingham, because of the inconsistent flows that can be found on this river.

When the selection races start, all of this preparation will be put into practice where the pressure and intensity of competition will reveal who is worthy of the Olympic ticket.

Conclusion

If this article has perked your interest, some of the contenders have web sites that you can go to gather further insight into the Olympic build-up.

Below are just a few:

www.campbellwalsh.com

www.richardhounslow.co.uk

www.davidflorence.com

www.bailliestottc2.co.uk

If you want to see the best of British in action, the early season races could provide a hint as to the form of the contenders. There are three Premier Division races which some of the athletes will use as a runway to the team trials. These will be held on the 'Ski-Slope', River Tryweryn on the 15th March and in Grandtully, Perthshire on the 29-30th March.

For more information about getting into slalom yourself, contact the Slalom Administrator (details in the Member's Directory) or look on www.canoeslalom.co.uk Maybe you have what it takes to compete for an Olympic spot in 2012 or beyond?

ETIENNE STOTT

University paddlers blow competition out the water

An emphatic championship victory cemented Nottingham Trent University's place as the country's premier canoeing university at the weekend. Students paddled their way to three gold, two silver and two bronze medals to win the overall title at the British Universities Sports Association (BUSA) Canoe Slalom Championships in Teesside.

The university's canoe club, represented by 22 students, scooped gold in the single canoe, double canoe and men's team categories; silver in double canoe and men's kayaking; and bronze in men's kayaking and the men's team event. The medal haul helped them overcome last year's winner, Newcastle University, who finished the competition in second place.

Paddler Ben Lane, who won a bronze medal in the men's team event, said: *"We were quietly confident going into the championship but never expected to do this well, it was a fantastic result. We were all exhausted at the end of the day but delighted that everyone who paddled had contributed to such a memorable victory."*

Six of the medal-winning paddlers are members of Nottingham Trent University's Student Talented Athlete Recognition Scheme (STARS) which provides support to individuals, enabling them to excel in both their academic and sporting careers.

The scheme assists students in achieving their full potential by providing an athlete centred programme, a range of high-quality support services and work with internal and external partners to provide the best-possible support and training environment.

Nottingham Trent University's Director of Sport and Lifestyle, James Hayter, said: *"This is a superb result for the university and a great early boost for our Student Talented Athlete Recognition Scheme in its inaugural year. The canoe slalom team members and the university canoe club as a whole have really done themselves proud; this is rich reward for hours of training in all weathers and at various times of day."*

"We're now looking ahead to the next BUSA canoe event, the Canoe Polo Championship in April. Hopefully we can build on our recent successes in the canoe white water event and now the canoe slalom. Another championship win would confirm our standing as the top university in the UK for canoeing disciplines."

Men's canoe doubles

This is the only category in which GB did not secure an Olympic boat spot at the 2007 World Championships. So whoever wins Olympic selection will have to race the other European nations that do not have a space either. This race will be the European Championships in Krakow, Poland. Gaining an Olympic space will be a big task with the Polish, Russians and Slovenians eyeing up the two remaining European allocation spaces. The two crews in contention are Nick Smith and Dan Goddard, with Tim Baillie and Etienne Stott their main opposition. Baillie and Stott are the reigning UK Champions and have shown good form early in the season, but Goddard and Smith have really improved their game in their second winter of training together. Both crews will have to be at a peak of cohesion and technique in order to make a shot at the Olympic qualifiers a few weeks later.



Goddard and Smith
By David Leathborough

Canoe single

A fascinating race this promises to be. The two main contenders are extremely difficult to separate pace-wise. David Florence (fifth in the 2007 worlds) probably has the edge with his amazing consistency, which gave him second overall in the 2007 World Cup series. Stuart MacIntosh, who bases himself at the 2000 Olympic course in Australia, has a flair and technique that gives him fantastic pace. He was eighth at the World Championships and would be looking to go to his third Olympics. Both men will have to race at 100% and with an iron nerve to triumph in this battle. The chasing pack is likely to include Mark Proctor, Adam Marshall, Colin Radmore and Greg Pitt. All are young, technically excellent and very swift when they get their race strategy right.



David Florence
By David Leathborough



Baillie and Stott
By David Leathborough



Stu McIntosh
By Neil Civan

Competition – slalom

Providing a springboard

Nottingham's canoe slalom residential academy provides a springboard for athletes aiming high in 2012 and beyond.

As the canoe slalom season approaches, not only is 2008 an important year for our Beijing Olympic medal hopefuls, it is also a big year for our academy athletes making big strides as they prepare themselves for the London Olympics in 2012 and beyond.

The BCU World Class Programmes looked at how they could assist our talented junior athletes to develop into medal contenders in time for London. After a flurry of activity and research into other academies, the first intake of four athletes moved to Nottingham in September 2006 in line with the start of the academic year.

The academy is open to the most talented canoe slalom athletes at post GCSE (16+) and is set up to support athletes for up to two years until transitioning into the senior ranks. In addition to committing to the full training programme outlined, the athletes must also commit to pursuing an agreed level of personal development or education during their time within the academy. Athletes are short-listed by the coaching team who look at the commitment, raw talent, attitude and results of each individual or crew before being invited to an interview along with their parents to determine if the academy would be the right choice for them.

Athletes are placed in the capable hands of local 'host' families living within a two mile radius of Holme Pierrepont who take day to day responsibility for their welfare on behalf of the BCU. The athletes then fit their training sessions with their education

demands and develop vital skills such as time management and communication. The support provided by the host families is pivotal to the success of the academy.

With daily whitewater access significantly restricted in the UK, the advantage of the academy is that athletes are able not only to access whitewater coached sessions at Holme Pierrepont on a daily basis and train alongside the best British senior athletes but also to access additional support services through the BCU and English Institute of Sport. The additional services that are able to be accessed are sports psychology, biomechanics, physiotherapy, medical support, massage, physiology testing and monitoring, nutrition information, strength and conditioning, coaching and careers and lifestyle advice.

Mark Ratcliffe, Head Coach to the Olympic Development Programmes and coach to Tom Brady one of the 2007 intake stated, *"When compared with many of the countries that we have to compete against, we are behind when it comes to ready access to whitewater. The introduction of the academy has enabled our most talented athletes to make this transition two years ahead of where they traditionally have been and with access to world class coaching and support services, they have every chance of success on the world stage."*

The academy is managed by Andy Maddock, Nottingham Academy Manager who takes responsibility for all aspects of the running of the residential academy

programme. He said, *"Additional lottery funding has allowed us to provide support to our very best junior athletes to facilitate the best chance of them achieving the podium in 2012 and beyond. It was a busy few months to put all the support structures in place but totally worthwhile and a project that has huge possibilities."*

Silver medal

The first intake of four athletes served one year in the academy before graduating to senior ranks due to their ages and the highlight has to be 17-year-old C1 paddler Greg Pitt, placed sixth after the semi-final of the Junior European Championships. Greg confidently stated to the team physiotherapist as he prepared for his final run that he was going to win a medal. This was not arrogance on Greg's part, more a sign of how his own confidence and self belief had transformed in the past 12 months. Ten minutes later Greg was celebrating at the bottom of the river in Krakow knowing that he had won an individual European Championship silver medal.

Greg was not alone at the European Championships accompanied by two of the other three residential academy athletes who were not quite able to match his medal winning performance but all put in personal bests, including Joe Morley's second place in qualification whose form unfortunately with a mistake in the middle section of his semi-final run did not convert to the final.

James Bailey reflecting on this first year as an academy athlete commented, *"I feel the academy has helped me loads over the past few months because I have had much more access to whitewater so have got better technically, I also have more time*

next year when we will be looking after ourselves totally."

During the final year of the residential academy a series of workshops are introduced that develop the skills of the athletes in a variety of key areas from managing finances, nutrition and practical cooking lessons to sessions on media skills, marketing and publicity.

September 2007 saw a new intake of three athletes onto the residential academy programme, all aged 16 and hungry to develop themselves as top performers in the sport of canoe slalom.

After a tough winter of training, often with our Olympic squad, April will see the culmination of the GB Junior team selection races and assuming selection is achieved, all sights will then shift to producing optimum performances at the Junior European Championships in Slovenia in July and the Junior World Championships in the Czech Republic two weeks later. For these athletes, success this year would be a good milestone with a structured pathway to deliver medals at the 2009 Junior European Championships in Slovakia.

In September 2009 we anticipate our third intake of academy athletes and with GB hosting the 2009 Senior European Championships in Nottingham, we should have a new dimension to the benefits, as we expect many of the top paddlers within Europe to be coming to Holme Pierrepont for blocks of training over the winter.

Getting to the podium at any level in sport is a huge achievement. These athletes share a dream that through their talent, commitment and a lot of hard work they can aspire to stand on the top of the podium to the sound of the British national



Greg Pitt



James Bailey

with my coach so we can work together more often which is very beneficial.

"We get used to living away from home and being more independent but we don't have to do all our cooking and washing. We are also getting 'life lessons' for example being taught to cook, wash, clean, organisational skills and having a professional attitude, to prepare us for

anthem. The Opening ceremony of the 2012 Olympics is just over 1550 days away and to get to this level there is a long, exciting journey and to some 2012 may only be the start, the destination may be many more hard days of training away... ●

ANDY MADDOCK - NOTTINGHAM ACADEMY MANAGER



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Watch out for a new EDM (Early Day Motion) coming out

John Grogan MP (Selby) is going to put out another EDM to urge the government to grant public access to our inland waters.

This was the original EDM which John put out in conjunction with our 'Paddle to Westminster'. It received well over 120 MPs signatures and caused a real stir.

Original EDM 957 in 2005 Rivers access for non-powered craft

That this house urges the government to extend legislation on access to the countryside to allow canoeists and users of other non-powered craft the same access rights as those provided for walkers; acknowledges that the most successful Olympic canoeing nation, Germany, requires land owners to tolerate the use of non-powered craft on their waterways; and appreciates that with increased access to waterways, there will be greater participation in canoeing leading both to obvious health benefits for the nation and to increased chances of future Olympic success.

John is not a canoeist but believes the access situation to be truly unjust and not in keeping with a modern society. He has campaigned in the past for opening up the rivers in Yorkshire too...

This is an earlier comment from John Grogan,

"There are 40 canoeing clubs in Yorkshire alone. The rivers belong to us all and should be opened as of right to non-powered craft."

We do not know the number of the EDM yet but as soon as we do it will be published on the BCU and the Rivers Access Campaign web sites www.riversaccess.org. As soon as it is available please contact your MP via letter, email, or visit. Let your MP know that you want them to sign up to the new EDM. We will also put up a new letter on the web site which you can adapt... Do not take no for an answer. It is time 'they' realised it is not just a canoeist's issue. We will write to our supporting organisations and ask them to put it out through their networks too.

Watch out for a new petition too... more information will be on the Rivers Access Campaign. This is something for you to sign up to.

BBC NW Politics Programme

On Saturday 27th January, the BBC filmed a piece concerning access, or rather the lack of it at the Burrs Outdoor Activity Centre in Bury. They even put a camera on one of the boats so that shots from a canoeist's perspective could be taken. The paddler faithfully promised not to capsize and get the electrics wet which were inside his boat. The equipment went for a dip in the water but hallelujah, it still worked and there were some amazing shots!

It was extremely windy but we did manage to film. The TV presenter Naomi and the camera crew also went afloat. None of them had ever been in a canoe before but really enjoyed the experience and Naomi was taken down river after the filming to the car park via a few little rapids. Thanks Grant Dillon for being such a steady canoe paddler and putting the camera crew and presenter at ease. Mark gave a great interview and was well supported by Norman and Mark Green along with two very jolly members from Halifax CC. Thanks also should go to Patricia



Filming from the bank



Naomi's introduction

Green who supplied us all hot coffee, very welcome indeed on such a cold morning.

Thank you to Ribble CC (members named earlier) and Halifax CC who gave up their time to support the campaign.

On the Sunday a live piece was taken at Manchester CC and Mark Burch owner of Brookbank Canoes kindly volunteered to be interviewed. The live interview followed the piece that had been filmed the day before. Mark did really well against a rather loud and forceful landowner. Being interviewed is always extremely difficult as often the interviewer says what they are going to ask and then changes their mind part way through and puts a different slant on things.

We were not responsible for the editing or any bias of the programme. The health benefits and pleasures of canoeing and access for all watersports was actually mentioned in the interviews, likewise so was the fact that it is not a fishing versus canoeing issue, but all had been conveniently edited out.

An ex-pat's view about access

I have just watched with horror the North West Politics Programme a piece of which concerned access to rivers.

I am an ex-pat now living in Australia (20 plus years) but currently in England on three weeks vacation. What is happening to this country? It appears to be going backwards. How can the rivers be 'private'? In an over crowded island such as this, the government cannot really justify the fact that vast tracts of waterways are not open to the general public but to a 'select minority'. Over the last few years I have been back for vacations and I have noticed the population here getting more and more obese and heard the UK government announce initiatives to decrease obesity and encourage people to be active.

It is inconceivable that a government who are promoting an active life style has not opened up one of the most natural and enjoyable resources for use. Watersports, such as canoeing, are green, environmentally friendly and can be used for the greater benefit of people of all ages. The fact that watersports is healthy, good for personal development and where knowledge of the outdoors can be gained was not even mentioned in the clip. It is outrageous that members of the public cannot use the waterways for watersports and leisure activities. How can so few 'control' such a valuable resource that should be accessible to all.

The perceived 'battle' between canoeists and anglers is ridiculous, the two activities are mutually compatible and there is research work to show this. The coverage that came across was that for the landowners the issue was purely financial greed and pressure has been brought about through the 'old boy' network to keep waters for exclusive use for anglers.

I know public money to the sum of many, many millions is used to clean rivers and stock with fish... well surely public money raised via personal tax should mean that the rivers should be available for public use.

In Australia the rivers are available to all and this ridiculous archaic system does not exist. When will the UK government realise that this situation is untenable? The piece was extremely biased and I felt made this country look decidedly backward.

Wake up it is the 21st century! You have here a very small but beautiful over crowded country, it is time the 'select few' shared it!

MICHAEL COOPER

Adelaide, Australia (e-mail address supplied)

Wish I had had my camera!

Whilst watching a canoe race on a weekend in February there was the funniest and most ironic of sights! At one of the portages in the lock cut was an angler. He had his chair and rods right in the way. He had decided to go in to the pub for a pint or two whilst the race was on. But what made it funny was that he had left two rods next to his empty chair leaning up against a British Waterways 'NO FISHING' sign! All of the race participants saw the rods had a chuckle about them being against the 'No Fishing' sign and ALL of them did their up most not to accidentally knock or damage his kit in anyway!

If only I had my camera it would have made an excellent picture!

House of Commons – Written Answers – 6th February 2008

Taylor, R - Watersports
(canoe access agreements)

Contents

Dr. Richard Taylor:

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if he will make a statement on canoe access agreements; and how much his department has spent on researching such agreements. [184246]



Providing greater access to the rivers will enable a healthier and fitter nation as canoeing and other water sports are very much about participation

Jonathan Shaw:

The government share canoeists', and other user groups', aspirations for more and better access to inland water and have been working, through our agencies, to deliver this over a number of years. The government's view is that a statutory right of access to inland waterways is not appropriate. The evidence

indicates that the demand for access would more effectively be met by a targeted approach, which involves identifying where access is needed, and then creating access agreements with the landowner and other interested parties. Since 2001, £399,000 has been spent researching such arrangements.

We will also politely remind the angling fraternity of this...

Effects of Canoeing on Fish Stocks and Angling – Research and Development Technical Report W266

The research undertaken by the Environment Agency on behalf of the Angling and Canoeing Liaison Group – a group established to encourage communication between angling and canoeing communities – involved consultation with both canoeist and anglers along with independent opinion from a panel of ten experts.

The research found that there is no empirical evidence linking canoeing with damage of spawning grounds and stocks.



Baby fish fry

Did you know that Natural England has now stated that voluntary access agreements are simply not viable or sustainable so therefore do not work? They are not the only large organisation to be pointing this fact out to the government.

What has the study actually achieved?

Very little. 72kms (45 miles) has been negotiated for paddlers, but in reality there was already agreement and acceptance for canoeing to take place on much of the area of study (the Environment Agency had sponsored a canoeist's guide to one of the rivers). So in two years a meagre 20 miles of access have been gained with some of that being highly restrictive and complicated. Even on one of the rivers where the access agreement is in place there was no contested access before the agreement. Also in order to paddle the route, one has to plan ahead in order to get the gates etc open so one can portage safely.

There are over 41,000 miles of rivers (over three metres wide) with no access! At this rate gaining access to rivers is too slow and certainly not adequate! Calculate how much that would cost if 20 miles cost £399,000.

We have written to Dr Richard Taylor giving him the full facts and information about the campaign. He is MP for Wyre Forest and an independent Member of Parliament. Is he your MP? Have you visited him yet? If not, why not go along and meet him to reinforce what we have sent to him about the lack of access to inland waters.

The River Lea, Hertfordshire

A short two hour paddle



the river becomes very narrow and stops at a grating.

Canoeing down the river, you are never more than 20 metres from the canal, though the vast amount of undergrowth makes it hard to cross from one to the other. The river seems to be blocked in one or two places by overhanging trees, but I had no problem getting past them in my Canadian and it added to the fun. They do have the effect of slowing down the river and duckweed accumulates in great swathes which can make the going quite slow.

Eventually you come to a very small caravan site where the river turns away from the canal through a right and left hand bend, again with more overhanging trees seeming to form an obstruction. On the right hand bank, hidden, is an industrial estate. You can hear the noise, but the river is quite well hidden. After this stretch, brickwork arches signify a more direct connection with the housing around you and this is quite near the halfway point.

Canoeing under the railway lines, there is now a small park on your left. The get out point is on the left, five metres before an overflow channel on the left. This is a vertical drop and after another 30 metres the river flows into an old mill through a metal grating.

This is the site of the old Broxbourne Mill and at weekends the mill wheel can be seen running, though it is now made of man-made materials. There is a small information board about the mill. At the get-out point, the obvious

get-in is immediately on your left. Follow this and you have to get out again and negotiate Blakes Boatyard on the canal. Better to carry the canoes about 80 metres to some holiday chalets just past the old mill and get in there. There are public toilets here.

You very quickly rejoin the canal, turning left and heading back upstream. There is a pub on the right selling drinks and food, you now go past the boatyard where narrow boats and day boats can be hired. The canal is quite wide and not as interesting as the river, but there is no current to paddle against. At Carthegena Lock, portage on the right. It is worth walking onto the island (ice creams can be purchased here) and walking round to the weir. We saw dozens of large fish, presumably carp, just underneath the foot bridge.

Carrying on up the river, you then come back to the first lock at Dobbs Weir, which can be portaged on the right or continue back up the river to the weir itself and portage back over the road to the car park. ●

COLIN SOUTHWARD



River Wey Navigation

A quick five mile paddle

My brother came to England for the weekend from Austria where he now lives. Whilst the rivers around Innsbruck are more technically challenging, he loves a paddle when he stays in London. This time I decided on a very small trip as we only had 2.5 hours at the most.

It is 07:00 on a Sunday morning and we put in at Newark Priory by the B367 crossing the River Wey Navigation not far from Guildford in Surrey on the OS Landranger Map 186. There is a small public car park (get there before the fisherman in the open season by arriving early). Launch to the left of the bridge when coming from the A3 Ripley direction. We headed up river towards Paper Court Lock near Paper Court Farm and portaged at the lock following the canal navigation keeping left all the time on a straight route.

We passed under the A247 and came up to and went through Worsfold flood gates. From here we swung almost 360 degrees to the right, following the original old course of the River Wey we headed towards Carbridge. I had read that you can portage on the right and

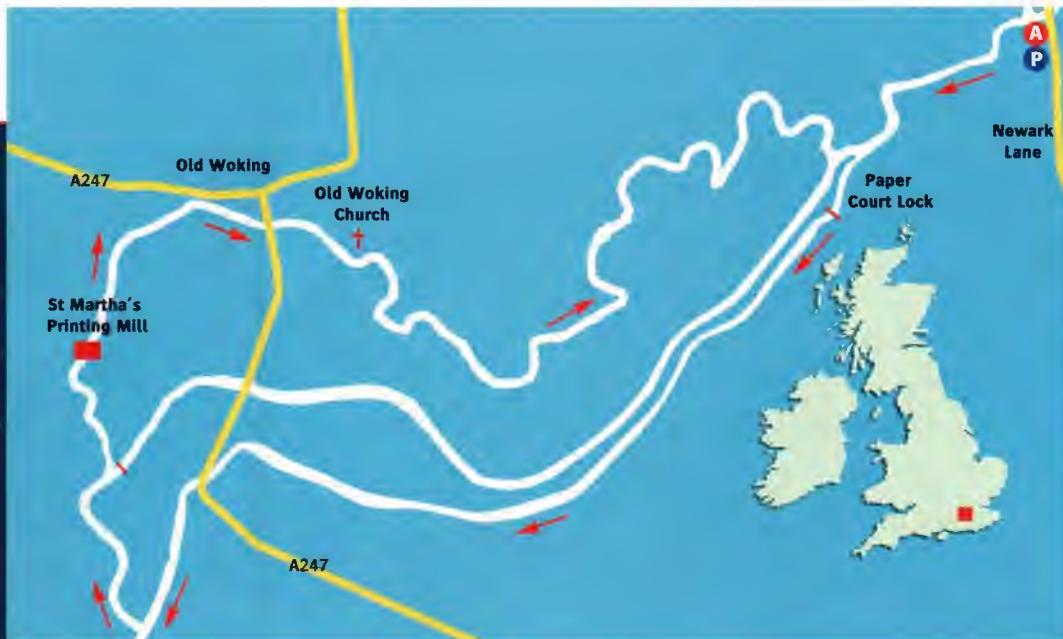
Start by parking in the public car park opposite the Fish and Eels pub at Dobbs Weir in Hoddesdon. Meals can be had in the pub or the excellent cafe in the car park. There are public toilets here.

You can get straight onto the canal or a short portage of 80 metres takes you back over the road and you can get in just below the weir. If you choose to get in the canal, you have a paddle of 300 metres before you have to portage round the first lock. Getting in at the weir saves this. Presuming you get in at the weir, you paddle down stream until you get to the end of the camp site. There is a small turn to your right which follows the edge of the camp site. If you choose to paddle down the canal to the first lock, you need to turn right back up the river for 15 metres, and then left down the river.

You are now on the river. At first it is quite narrow, but there is enough current to push you along. Through the remnants of an old bridge and you then turn left. In the summer the river can be quite overgrown with duck weed and lillies which can slow you down, but give the river a pleasing and pleasant outlook. With no canal boats to churn the water, it is usually very clear and you can see fish and other river life. I am sure we saw Crayfish at one point. We definitely saw Kingfishers. You could turn right and go upstream for about 3/4 mile, but



The canoe trails have been submitted by BCU members. The BCU have not carried out risk assessments and cannot take liability for any accidents, damage or loss of property whilst paddling on these trails.



The Litton Fish Ladder Linton-on-Ouse. R. Ouse. Yorkshire

This is a big weir, which is normally unshootable, but has a fish ladder that is very playful. The weir also creates good moving water training below it, to practice ferry glides and break outs. So there is something for everyone and all levels of ability.

On the OS maps it is right on the join of sheets 105 York with 100 Malton and Pickering. So on sheet 105 to get there it is grid ref 600501 but you'll need sheet 100 to see the river.

Take the A1M to the A59 Harrogate/York turn at junction 47. Turn east towards York A59. Stay on this road for five miles until you see a Esso petrol station on your right, but you will be turning left just before it, sign posted Nun Monkton. Stay on this road for two miles until the third turn, (not private drives and tracks etc) which has two signs on the left, a red one for the Nun Monkton Estate, alongside a white sign for 'Sweet Hills'. You'll know you have taken the correct one if in 100m you see a truck stop. Follow this track/lane until the road bends, but you go straight on, to a T-junction turn right then in 100m turn left, a sign says 'River View', on a white gravel track to a building. Follow the track round to the right. Park as near as you like to the river, usually under a big tree. This is a great barbecue spot with loads of spectator potential.

On the left of the building you turned right, there is a post box which also serves as an honesty box and the going rate is 50p per car with 50p per boat or spectator. Please honour this as it is very reasonable. If you see Bill, say hello, as he is a really nice chap and a good friend to paddlers.

DICK CONSTABLE

use the drainage channel to go back towards Paper Court Lock, but I wanted to explore the old river which by now was running very strongly. We careered around fantastically sharp bends in the river at quite a fast rate, where rarely have I travelled at such speeds along a river in south east of England that isn't at least tidal. I could see by my map the river disappears under a building in front of us so we began to slow down as much as was possible. Then before my eyes was a very low bridge perhaps only 18 inches above the water level. A quick duck and we were both under, our heads were still intact but before us, I

saw a brick wall 50 feet high with four or five dark tunnels, with no light at their ends. A quick turn around was required back under the low bridge and a quick portage around this obstacle that turned out to be St Martha's Printing Mill (Old Woking). We found somewhere to launch on the other side and were off once more down the old river course, with a full head of steam gratis of the outflow from the mill.

We soon found ourselves viewing an old Norman Church at Old Woking looking like a quintessentially English scene with cows and bull rushes along the banks of the river. This scenery

stretched for about two miles but it passed pretty quickly with help from the stream, the river has some tremendous bends 110 degrees as my brother calls them. Before I knew it, we had popped out at the back on the main channel just below Paper Cut Lock, then there was a short paddle back to Newark Priory, we scrambled ashore between fisherman who by now had fanned out along the river bank. We had completed a fantastic short trip of about five miles in two hours with two portages and all this in a two-person inflatable kayak.

STEPHEN MOYSEY

The River Idle, Yorkshire

Misterton - Retford - Misterton

This is a circular trip which was originally organised by the Canoe Camping Club, taking four leisurely days and three nights camping. Check on availability of camping at Misterton, Clayworth, Hallcroft Fisheries and the King William pub at Scaftworth near Bawtry.

Start at Coopers Bridge, Misterton. Heading west and following the Chesterfield Canal until you reach the marina at Clayworth, about 13km. Things to look for are the fields to the north, hiding the low lying River Idle and the short tunnel at Drakeholes, suitable for a lunch stop. There are two locks to portage or go through. Check on camping at the marina in Clayworth, two good pubs for evening meals and a small post office and shop.

On the second day we canoed into Retford and over the short aqueduct, portaging on the right down to the River Idle. You can get some shopping in at the supermarket by the town lock. This part of the canal passes by several small villages and again, two locks. There is an excellent cafe just before the town lock in Retford. The river Idle has some current here, with

some small weirs which are easily shot and you very quickly get to Hallcroft Fisheries, on the left after the footbridge. You can camp here, but there is along walk to the toilets. This day was about 12km.

The third day is solely on the river, though at times the levees can restrict your views of the surrounding countryside. The river is very winding, though the water is clear and we did line down the canoes down a small weir, due to lack of water and obstructions. There are not many places to stop on this section of the river except at Mattersey where there is a pub. This trip is about 19km and we camped at the King William pub in Scaftworth which has an excellent bar menu.

The final day of our trip was continuing down the River Idle back to Misterton. The river now loses a lot of its current and is again surround by high levees on some sides, though you can make out the first day's journey and where the tunnel is at Drakeholes by looking south up to the small rise in the ground. Being flat, this part of the route can be wind affected, either slowing your speed to a crawl or zipping you along if it is behind

your back. This is a very solitary day of canoeing, no villages or towns to speak of after Bawtry, but a great sense of isolation and being on your own. Get out at Misterton, about 17km.

COLIN SOUTHWARD



Usk and upper River Wye canoe access launched

On Friday 19th October 2007 Jane Davidson, The Welsh Assembly Government's Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing, officially launched a project that facilitates shared access between anglers and paddlers over 55 miles of the Usk and upper river Wye. The launch took place on the bank of the river Wye at the Groe, in Builth Wells, Powys.

Canoeing these upper reaches is considered at its best during the high flows of autumn and winter, while fishing takes place during drier months, giving the opportunity for an amicable sharing of the river. The project has also negotiated access and egress points and provided signage and maps.

Representatives from British Outdoor Professionals Association (BOPA), local outdoor centres, riparian owners, Countryside Council for Wales, Environment Agency Wales and the Wye and Usk Foundation, were responsible for making things happen and delivering the finished arrangements.

The agreed dates for access are 18th October to 2nd March (inc.) for the Usk, and 18th October to 15th March (inc.) for the upper Wye. However, under the arrangements, canoeing is also available outside these dates when the rivers are in spate, and the levels are above the red markers on two gauges. We have also negotiated access and egress points, all these points will have signs giving details of the access agreement together with the gauge level to indicate if the river levels are acceptable for paddling under the spate clause.

One of the problems we had with the old agreements was in providing canoeists with the correct information. In order to resolve this, British Outdoor Professionals Association is setting up a web site www.canoeaccess.org as well as sending the relevant information to all canoe magazines, canoe clubs, and student unions. It is hoped that this agreement can be used as a pilot scheme to negotiate future access to other rivers and I, together with BOPA, would be pleased to meet riparian owners and fishing interests in order to continue this program.

MEGAN HUGHES

Water Framework Directive

The Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) is the most significant legislation for water in 20 years and sets out a process to protect and improve the environmental condition of all waters. It provides a common approach to setting environmental objectives to achieve 'good status' for surface waters (including lakes, streams and rivers), groundwater, estuaries and coastal waters (out to one nautical mile) within the European Community. The Environment Agency (EA) is the competent authority in England and Wales to lead the Water Framework Directive.

The directive embodies the concept of integrated river basin management plans and sets out to identify the environmental pressures and problems (significant water management issues) facing the river basin and associated catchments. This will determine measures for River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) to drive improvements to the

quality of the water environment – cleaner waters, abstraction, sustainable use, protect and enhance aquatic habitats and natural landscapes, and more opportunities for recreation.

Consultations on RBMPs for each of the nine River Basin Districts in England and Wales have commenced; and the EA is seeking views from stakeholders. Draft RBMPs are to be published in December 2008.

Canoe England representatives attended six catchment workshops in the south east river basin district in February; and is keen for paddlers to contribute to this process in each of the other eight river basin districts. Paddlers can have a detailed knowledge of catchments and water bodies. At national level, Canoe England is a member of the DEFRA National Stakeholders Group.

How the EA is consulting varies with their management in each river basin district that is a mix of catchment workshops and means of comment on outputs from the EA.

To take part in your River Basin Management Plan consultation

Contact the River Basin Planning Manager at your regional or area EA office or contact: access@bcu.org.uk

Learn more about the Directive

There are a number of resources on the internet for how river basin planning will work where you live:

- www.environment-agency.gov.uk/wfd gives details on how the directive will impact on user sectors.
- www.environment-agency.gov.uk/wfdforums an online forum to discuss significant water management issues in the South East, South West and Dee River.
- www.euwfd.com all about the directive in the UK and Ireland from the Foundation for Water Research.

The Water Framework Directive will overhaul the management and use of surface and ground waters with implications for recreation, business and industry.

Marine Bill and Coastal Access

The government is expected to launch the Marine Bill in April to manage the marine environment in a more integrated way with a vision for clean healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas. Government reviews have concluded that in many places the marine environment is becoming increasingly crowded with demands on space for development, to exploit resources, for recreation and nature conservation.

It is anticipated that the bill will capture most water recreation activities to include; canoeing, sailing and boating, swimming, diving, angling, surfing etc. The intention is to ensure protection of UK marine natural assets, simplify law and address the sometimes conflicting demands for energy, aggregates, shipping, fishing and recreation; while also ensuring that conservation objectives are achieved.

The Marine Bill will address water quality and this will lead to some overlap with the Water Framework Directive. It is currently unclear how the bill will be positioned with the directive.

Another factor in the Marine Bill recently announced by the government is the inclusion of coastal access. Originally there was going to be dedicated primary legislation piece the extension of public rights to the coast, but the government has had a change of policy and is bolting coastal access onto the Marine Bill.

Canoe England responded to the 2007 consultations for the Marine Bill White Paper and Coastal Access and will closely follow the passage of the Bill through parliament.

For more information on the detail of the Marine Bill visit www.defra.gov.uk

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Competition

High fives

DARREN WINS 5TH BRITISH SURF CHAMPIONSHIP

Darren Bason, Newquay Surf Kayaker, travelled to the north east of England where he emerged victorious in the British championships at Druridge Bay in very cold 2-3ft conditions.

32 of the UK's best surf kayakers attended the event, which had been cancelled and moved from November due to lack of surf. The competition was very close throughout with good surfing from all the competitors including Chris Hobson from Northern Ireland, who as a junior entered four individual events and made the final in all. The finals were held in the last light of the day with temperatures below freezing where Darren displayed a good solid performance but maxing out on his wave counts five minutes before the final horn. Darren won both categories: the international class for the fifth time and the HP Open class for the fourth time.

At 37 he has proved with the land based training courtesy of the Glendorgal health club and plenty surf recently, that he can still remain at the top of the sport where the other competitors are at least ten years younger.



PHOTO: GEOFF TYDEMAN
GEOFFTYDEMAN@GMAIL.COM

Stafford Sports Personality of the Year wins mini slalom series

Stafford and Stone CC paddler Greg Pitt achieved a double success winning the prestigious Stone Mini Slalom Series and the Stafford Sports Performer of the Year. The 19-year old Canadian singles (C1) paddler won the Final of this year's Stone Mini Slalom series with an impressive performance in the 10-boat Final.

The finalists had earned their place in the final by having achieving consistently good performances over the three mini slalom events. Greg went into the final in second place but could easily have lost that position to one of the lower division girls, Lara Horne or Steph Crowley, who had

excelled on the course having such a favourable handicap.

In the Final, Pitt managed to knock three seconds off his previous times, giving him a handicapped time of 69 seconds. Lara Horne came second with

a handicapped time of 70 seconds. Greg Hitchen, a Premier Division paddler from Matlock CC, was favourite to win, going into the final in first place but with no handicap his 71 seconds, although the fastest time of the day, was not good enough and he finished in third place.

The family of Roger Symes, a long-term sponsor of the club who passed away last year, presented Greg the Mini Slalom trophy.

The overall winner of the third Mini Slalom was Nicole Bain from Cherwell CC – an experienced canoe polo player who was ranked in the entry level Div 4 because she hadn't entered slalom before.

Stafford and Stone CC won four of the eight awards at Friday's Stafford Sports Personality of the Year Awards. As well as Greg's award they were: Team of the Year – for winning the Interclub Championships in September; Coach of Year, Andy Neave; and female Performer of the Year, Lizzie Neave.

RUTH HOLDWAY

Raising awareness of canoe polo

It is the fastest growing competitive canoeing discipline in the UK, with over 200 clubs throughout the country, however most people are still unaware of canoe polo. Played at regional, national and international level, canoe polo remains one of the few sports in which men and women can play together.

Although polo has gone from strength to strength in recent years, it is still not widely understood, so a group of students in Bristol University CC decided to educate the local public about their favourite game.

The club organised an inter-university tournament, which took place last

Saturday, and attracted some of the best university teams including the University of the West of England (UWE), Warwick and Bath. Eight teams entered in total, and 16 games were played. Bristol University CC entered the Chainsaw Dolphins and Ninja Marmots, teams that have already seen success this year in South West regional league matches.

During the week before the tournament they appeared on three radio stations, secured an article in the local newspaper and featured in the student paper, talking to a total of over 600,000 people in the city.

Fredel Gibson, the club's polo captain and organiser of the tournament, says:

"The level of interested our event generated in the local press was really encouraging for the future of the sport. We gave a live interview on the local BBC radio station, and even had non-kayakers turn up as spectators!"

"Canoe polo is a fantastic game and it is the responsibility of those who love it to help it grow. This year we have more than doubled participation within our own club and hope to extend next year's tournament over two days to accommodate more teams."

While the Bristol teams' efforts bought attention to this fantastic sport, it was Warwick University who walked away victorious following wins against University of the West of England's (UWE) Pink Panthers, Bath's Bats, Warwick's women and the Bristol club's own Chainsaw Dolphins. They took home not a trophy, but a winner's cake, which was much enjoyed by all!

Fredel says: *"The whole event was a huge success and a fantastic standard of polo was seen from all teams competing. We hope that our event helped to encourage more people in Bristol to give canoeing a try and would recommend that any clubs reading this who don't currently have a polo team get one together quickly!"*

KATRINA JAMES



Greg Pitt being presented the Mini Slalom Trophy by Eileen Symes and her children, Tony and Jeanette.



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Rob Roy returns to the Baltic



I had just read MacGregor's account of his adventures across Scandinavia in 'Rob Roy on the Baltic', when I chanced upon an identical Rob Roy kayak whilst carrying out routine maintenance work at the clubhouse.

She was made by Sewells of London 138 years ago and was in a fair condition. The hull is clinker built and made of oak. She is held together by brass rivets. The top streak is mahogany and the decks are fine cedar. She is 14 foot long, 26 inches broad and weighs 71 pounds (30kg) with sailing rig. One look at this historic craft convinced me that there could be no better way to explore the lakes, rivers and waterways of Scandinavia than to restore her and follow in MacGregor's footsteps.

It took me the best part of a year to bring her back to original condition. The decks were removed and the whole boat taken back to bare wood. Surprisingly, only two of the original oak planks and the keel strip had to be replaced. She was then rebuilt and re-varnished. Finally, a new set of sails returned her to her former glory. As far as I know, the only other Rob Roy of this type is in the Boat Museum in Windermere.

The Rob Roy had proved capable of the Scandinavian trip after a 'shakedown voyage' circumnavigating Wales. The book was carefully studied and the route marked using copies of MacGregor's original maps. As Norway and Sweden use different systems of grid referencing, the GPS had to be recalibrated for each.

From Newcastle to Christiansund

The following summer, with my partner Sally Ann and our friend Jane as shore support, I loaded the Rob Roy onto the roof rack of Jane's car and took a ferry from Newcastle to Christiansund. Nearly 150 years before MacGregor had caught a steamer from London to Christiana, as Oslo was previously known. The original Rob Roy was taken by train the 60km to Kongsvinger to begin the trip. I also took a train but unfortunately there wasn't room for the Rob Roy, so she continued her journey on the roof rack. From the window the views of the River Glama were inspiring. As MacGregor

Across Scandinavia by canoe

As a member of the Mersey Canoe Club, founded in 1870, I have long been interested in the exploits of John MacGregor, founder of The Royal Canoe Club (1866) and father of canoeing and kayaking in Europe. Tony Bebbington recounts his story of following in MacGregor's paddle strokes.

had done, I too "marvelled at the whirlpools and eddies and pondered what was in store."

I was determined to begin the voyage on the same spot as MacGregor. Access was difficult as it was now someone's back garden! However, as I found all through the trip, many people across Scandinavia know of MacGregor and were more than happy to make us welcome.

The start

And so the mammoth paddling trip began! Nearly 500km to reach the Baltic, south of Stockholm, and only three weeks to do it in! MacGregor took a more leisurely pace. He was a man of independent means and didn't have the time constraints of fitting in with school holidays! He allowed himself every Sunday off, whereas I planned no rest days at all!

At the start of the journey, the rivers were, often, too overgrown and dry to navigate. Where possible, if the flow allowed, I floated the Rob Roy in front of me and held her fast with the painter. This was the method I also used when travelling through fast moving water strewn with rocks. Sometimes, I was able to put the Rob Roy onto the stowable trolley and portage to the next suitable launch site. Occasionally, there was nothing for it but to put her back on the car! MacGregor faced the same problems, dragging his boat through shallows and pulling it through rivers choked with logs. He could never have dreamt of having a car and two female 'canoe carriers' on hand. He made do with any portage he could find between

A bad start to MacGregor's trip though the canoe was not damaged.



Sailing and fishing.



waterways. On eight occasions he had to haul his canoe onto steamboats in open water and in one incident, whilst using a horse and cart, the horse bolted and the cart was overturned. Luckily, his Rob Roy suffered "only a broken flag staff and one or two ribs were broken and there was scarcely a scratch on the varnish and not one crack on the cedar deck."

After the slow progress on rivers, reaching each lake was a relief. Now the landscape I paddled through was stunning and the weather was, for the most part, glorious with the dazzling sun reflected off the crystal clear water. For me the trip came to be coloured blue, green and orange; the blue above and below, the green of the endless swathes of trees which lined the lakes as far as the eye could see and the orange of the Rob Roy's sails. Most days nothing disturbed my idyll, as I paddled on and on past turquoise dragonflies, otters and birds of prey. The spirit of MacGregor hung, almost palpable, in the calm, stillness of the long summer days. For most of the trip I saw no one, until I reached the busy Gota Canal system.

I soon established a paddling rhythm, starting each day straight after breakfast and continuing on until dark. It was physically draining to sit all day on wooden floorboards, however, I must admit I cheated a little by using my Thermarest cushion – a luxury MacGregor certainly didn't have!

At the end of most lakes I had to navigate through dense reed beds. This was difficult enough for me, even with the advantage of a GPS for position and distance to waypoints. By contrast, MacGregor found his way by standing up and peering ahead, to try to pick out where the channel continued. I was occasionally forced to use this method as often the maze of channels ran into dead ends. Even then it was difficult to negotiate as the reeds were so dense and well over ten feet tall.

Thomas the artist

On stopping to check the map in a small Norwegian village near the Swedish border, an enormous man dashed out to exclaim over the beauty of the Rob Roy. He offered to show me the way to the launch site and, leaping onto a child's bicycle, led us along a series of



Not enough wind to sail today.



A lady I met in her home-made wooden canoe on the canal.

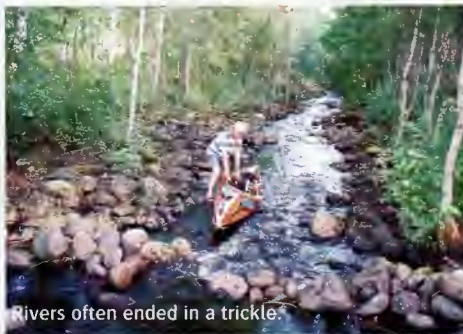
tiny lanes to a cornfield. Here, he threw down the bike and we walked, carrying the Rob Roy aloft, through the corn to the edge of a lake. It turned out that Thomas was an artist and very keen to paint the Rob Roy and myself. This was the chance I'd been waiting for! Being a Victorian gentleman, MacGregor was always properly dressed and favoured flannel. I had no flannel, but had packed my canoe club boater and navy blazer to 'dress to impress' if need be. Whilst Thomas made his wobbly return journey to fetch his camera, I got changed. When he returned I was dressed up and doing my best to emulate MacGregor's pose in one of his drawings! There followed a hilarious moment when Thomas laid his huge bulk in the shallow mud to find the best camera angle. Sadly, I have yet to see the finished oil but it is assured of pride of place in the canoe club if it ever arrives!

When MacGregor crossed the border along the Vrangs River, the opposing armies of Norway and Sweden were camped on either side. On my trip, the only clue that I had crossed was that the red and white of the Norwegian flags, gave way to the blue and yellow of Sweden.

Magnificent views

On the rivers I was forced to paddle, as the wind was fluky, coming from all directions. Once I reached the larger lakes and raised the sail it was bliss! Now I could lean back and enjoy the magnificent views. On Lake Glafsforden my first landing was a tiny island, which appeared as a dot on the horizon, gradually becoming bigger, until I moored at last. It seemed more than likely that MacGregor had stopped here too. As I gazed at the Rob Roy, lying on the quiet stones, the years between his journey and mine seemed to fall away, until I could almost feel his presence. Everything was exactly as he described it and it was hard not to imagine that he was watching over me.

On one occasion, halfway across a lake the wind picked up and changed direction so it was against me. I quickly doused the mainsail, fixed my spray deck to the combing and paddled into the wind. Waves



Rivers often ended in a trickle.

Help was occasionally needed.



crashed over the foredeck and without my neoprene spray deck I would have been flooded in seconds. MacGregor coped with similar conditions by using a 'waterproof apron' made of wood and mackintosh cloth, which fitted over the well. After an hour of strenuous paddling, I reached the lee of another island where I pulled in for shelter. Here, I met a Swedish family who had read about my travels in a local newspaper. They knew a little about MacGregor and were pleased to talk to the eccentric Englishman following his adventures!

After another long, lonely passage in filthy weather, it was invigorating to be met by the entire Karlstad CC paddling out to meet me. MacGregor was unable to land here because the town was devastated by a cholera epidemic. After drinks and a chat, they helped the girls to load the Rob Roy whilst I luxuriated in a hot shower! That was not the only time the day ended with

a bathe. It became my custom to swim in each lake or river before breakfast each day and then again before returning to camp for the evening ritual of a barbecue. All the water I paddled was crystal clear. Even that of the Gota Canal looked like it could be drunk straight from the canal, despite it being Sweden's premier tourist attraction!

Gota Canal

The Gota Canal was tedious at times, mile after mile of paddling with no wind or current to help. To reach Lake Roxen it was necessary to descend 70 feet through eleven locks. Going through the system would have taken a couple of hours but, just as MacGregor did before me, I slid the kayak down the grassy slopes in a matter of minutes! This caused much amusement to the crowds of tourists watching the slow descent of other craft! Stopping for lunch at a small boat museum one day, the curator proudly said that their oldest boat was 100 years old. I then invited him outside to see my means of transport, 38 years older and still going strong! In the final few days of the trip I increased my paddling rate, covering at least 35kms a day. This allowed a day out in Stockholm, which was spent visiting the Vassa Boat Museum!

The last day's paddling ended at Norrkoping. It was not as triumphant a conclusion as I'd hoped. I had landed inside the security fence of a large factory and the girls were waiting on the other side! Luckily, the security guard, who ran up as I arrived, had read of my exploits in the newspapers and happily agreed to help lift the Rob Roy over the fence!

And so, at last, I reached the Baltic. The Rob Roy has proved herself able "to sail steadily, to paddle easily, to float lightly, to turn readily, and to bear rough usage on stones and banks, and in carts, railways and steamers; to be durable and dry, as well as comfortable and safe" just as she was originally designed to be. MacGregor's theory was that "a canoe ought to fit a man like a coat". The Rob Roy had been a perfect fit on my journey and I look forward to our next adventure. ●

TONY BIBBINGTON

Competition – marathon

Essex Winter Series

The Essex Winter Marathon 2007/08 series reached its finale in February at Leaside (Hackney), with the presentation of overall trophies at the last of the six races.

A total of over 280 different competitors from around the region took part during the series, which opened on the Stort in November with 18 clubs participating.

The paddlers compete in 19 different classes according to age, sex and type of boat, over distances ranging from three to seven miles. Points are awarded to paddlers at each race and their five best scores are added together to give their overall position.

On the seven-mile course, Keith Moule of Chelmsford CC dominated the Men's Senior K1 class. The Senior K2 class was well contested, with Mark Hogan and Marcus Panayi of Leaside CC the eventual victors. Bishop Stortford's Mark Adams (Veteran Men's K1) and Leaside's Sam Rainey (Boy's U18 K1) took their respective class trophies for the second year in succession.

There were good results all round for the Wilkes family of Chelmsford. Mark Wilkes was unbeaten in Boys U16 K1 on the five-mile course to win the class trophy. His twin brother Peter elected to paddle in the Boys U18 class on the longer course and earned a well-deserved second place. Meanwhile, over on the three-mile course, mum Deborah Wilkes secured the Women's General Purpose trophy.

On the five-mile course, James Walkinton and Tristan Hill of Chelmsford CC won the U16 K2 trophy, but with Leah Stack and Alicia Crompton (Chelmsford) hot on their heels. First place in Women's K1 went to Sophie Parker of Chelmsford CC for the second year, while team mate Jane Eade won the Veteran Women's trophy.

Rachael Pinnock of Bishops Stortford CC won the U16 girls K1 series trophy following her unbeaten string of five races in that class. She was one of only two paddlers in the series to notch up a total of six gold medals, as the 14-year-old completed the series by paddling in the Women's K1 race – and scoring another win.

The other paddler to achieve this feat was Harry Cawston, who paddled in

each of the U12 K1 races (three miles) and won them all. Emily Gurney of Bishops Stortford was consistently the best performing U12 girl across the series. Bishops Stortford CC were awarded the Bob Porter Trophy for the club most represented in this class, including Michael Sollars racing for the first time at just eight years old.

Last year's winner of the U12s, Lewis Duffield of Chelmsford CC, went on to win Boys U14 K1 unbeaten (five miles). Millie Cawston of Chelmsford CC and Grace Jenkins of Leaside CC both performed excellently in the Girls U 14 K1 class (three miles), with the series trophy finally going to Millie.

One of the features of the Essex Winter Series is that there are separate races for boats other than racing kayaks. Chris Sharp of Southwold won Touring GP, Simon Hill of Chelmsford was the clear winner of the Men's GP class and brother and sister Luke and Catherine Robinson from Herts Young Mariners won the Boys and Girls Junior GP classes.

Current over 44 National C2 champions Paul Surrage and Jim Brett, found themselves winning the Marathon C2 class virtually unopposed. Meanwhile, the hotly contested Touring C2 class (three miles) was won for the second year in succession by John Green and Steve Chambers.

Ant Cayford (Bishops Stortford) won the Robin Dromard trophy for C1 on the five-mile course. This trophy was inaugurated last year in honour of the past organiser of the Essex Winter Series. Although Robin has now stepped down from this role, he continues to compete in C1 on the three-mile course, and this year took home the series trophy for an incredible fifth time.

Chelmsford CC won the 2007-2008 Essex Winter Series overall with 59 points, Bishops Stortford CC was second with 52, and Leaside CC third with 51. The Dick Grieves Trophy, awarded on the results of unranked juniors only, went to Leaside CC.

ANGELA ALDAM



A. Start of the Touring C2 class at the Bishops Stortford race (Nov 2007). John Green and Steve Chambers of Barking and Dagenham CC (cowboy hats) were the winners of this race and the series trophy.

B. Ant Cayford of Bishops Stortford CC racing at Bishops Stortford (Nov 2007). Ant was the winner of the Robin Dromard Senior C1 trophy.

C. Robin Dromard of Bishops Stortford CC at the start of the Novice C1 race at Cheshunt (Nov 2007). Robin was the winner of this race and of the class.

D. John Green and Steve Chambers of Barking and Dagenham CC at the start of the Touring C2 class at the Sudbury race (Jan 2008). They were the winners of the series trophy in this class.

E. Sophie Parker of Chelmsford CC (K1) racing at Sudbury (Jan 2007). Sophie was the winner of her race and of the Ladies K1 series trophy.

F. The start of the Girl's U16 K1 race at Chelmsford (Feb 2008). Closest to camera, Rachael Pinnock of Bishops Stortford CC was the winner of this race and of the series trophy.

G. Waiting for the start of the Mens K1 race at the Leaside event (Feb 2008). In front of the camera is Keith Moule of Chelmsford CC, winner of this race and of the series trophy.

H. The start of the Touring GP race at the Leaside event (Feb 2008). On the right is Chris Sharp of Southwold CC, winner of the series trophy for this class, and on the left is Ant Wright of Bishop's Stortford CC who came second in the series.

The series is organised by the Essex Canoeing Association.

A series of sprint events are planned for the summer – please see www.EssexCanoeing.org.uk for details.



- White Water Paddling
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Youth Freestyle Series 2008

The Youth Freestyle Series is back and building on the massive increase in entrants in the 2007 series, we have booked exclusive use at the majority of the venues to ensure maximum coaching and competition time enabling more paddlers to enter.



The Youth Freestyle Series consists of five paddling events across the UK. Each event includes expert coaching in the morning followed by a competition in the afternoon. Where venues allow, there will also be a boater X or team challenge event where paddlers will race head to head down the river.

The series is aimed at all U18 progressing whitewater paddlers who want to participate in freestyle competition or gain more experience and skills in whitewater/freestyle paddling. There are three age categories for the competition: 18 and

under; 15 and under and 12 and under. There is no minimum age but some previous whitewater experience and a reasonably reliable whitewater roll is necessary. No previous competition or freestyle experience is required.

As each event is run separately it doesn't matter if you enter one or all five events. But, early pre-entry for each event is essential (unfortunately we had to turn people away at two of the events last year). Visit www.youth.ukfreestyle.com to enter.

Information

This year's events will be held at:

- Llangollen Sunday 13th April
- Boulton Saturday 10th May
- Teeside Saturday 7th June
- Nene Sunday 6th July
- Nottingham Sunday 7th September

Cost: £9.00 per event or £35 for all five events. Closing date for entering all five events at the discounted rate will be Friday 4th April.

A big thank you goes to all the sponsors of the 2008 series: Pyranha, Dagger Europe/Palm Equipment, Squarerock/Jackson Kayaks, Kayakojacko and Desperate Measures.



TEAM CENTRAL

West Midlands in particular, has been host to several important events during the winter months. Canoe England's PESSCL officer, Ray Hudspith and SDO for Central, Stuart Briggs attended two similar but important events at Telford International Conference Centre. These were the School Sport Partnership (SSP) conference and the Sports Colleges Conference where there were enlightening and motivating speeches from renowned personalities such as double Olympic champion Kelly Holmes and Olympic medallist Roger Black. To audiences in excess of 1,000 sports orientated people they gave enthusiastic and encouraging messages to all involved in sport to continue the good work and to be prepared for the next round, the five hour offer.

Exhibitions

In February Canoe England staff, accompanied by colleagues from north of the border, the SCA, attended 'CanoeExpo'. This proved to be a very popular event



TEAM SOUTH



Biggest ever...

Newbury CC have organised their annual waterside series of races which this year have broken some records. Waterside A saw 526 paddlers go down the Kennet and Avon Canal in spectacular weather. Race B saw 344 racers doing the out and back course from Newbury. Race C the Mixed K2 record was beaten by Johnson and Taylor from Elmbridge. With just race D to go to between now and the DW, the competition is hotting up. These extra numbers will see changes for next year with an entry limit of 400 for Waterside A and it will be pre-entries only.

Wey smash participation targets

Wey KC in Guildford has been rebuilt over the last three years with help from the BCU Community Club

with particularly busy periods just before and just after lunch time! There were numerous enquiries about all that's happening in paddlesport at the moment with visitors and coaches from as far away as Turkey, Spain and Eire; a reflection perhaps on the influence, and the high regard held, of BCU Coaching! It was great to talk to so many committed to paddlesport.

Shortly after CanoeExpo Canoe England staff supported many volunteers from the West Midlands Regional Development team at their stand at the Boat and Caravan show. A completely different 'audience' for this event; not many committed paddlers but lots of young and older generation alike showing a huge interest in the range of boats and equipment on display. For the youngsters in particular a real go at paddling in the 'Come and Try It' pool. A resounding success with lots of interest in our sport.

Paddlesport Development Officers, Local Coaching Organisers, Regional Coaching Organisers and Coach Educators have all been very busy in Team Central as well! They have been organising and tutoring at Coach Update Forums. There have been Forums in Burton, Derby, Leicester, Leamington, Hereford and Suffolk, and that's just in 2008 so far! Coach Education courses at Levels 1 and 2 are almost too numerous to mention.

Paddlers? What have they been doing? Well, all the usual activity for this time of the year. White water paddling, touring and completing preparations for some tough competitive paddling ahead, including the Olympics!

Development Project. As part of the agreement with the BCU and Sport England, Wey have to track participation figures to show how successful they have been and to demonstrate the value of the investment.

In 2007 the club were so successful that in this year alone they surpassed the figures for the entire three year period with over 470 active members attending the club. Another area of growth was the huge increase in volunteers up from 79 to 230. This shows the drive and commitment that the club members have delivered to the project and how they have proved the need for their fantastic new facilities. Through this period Wey, Canoe England and Sport England have been working in partnership to employ two part time coaches to run introductory sessions and create school club links as part of the PESSCL program.

Not a splash in sight

Pupils from Bitterne Park Secondary School have started taking part in a school club link funded by Canoe England as part of its PESSCL program. Fourteen young people are taking part in the six week program at the school to complete the Paddlepower Start Award before coming to the club to have the chance to work towards Paddlepower Passport on the water.

Special breed of paddler

However, there is a special breed of paddler who not only paddles a long way but runs a long way too. He, or she, enters the duathlon. Originally set up by Steve Train, this event occurs monthly during the winter. Earlier events took place at Leicester and Anker Valley but I was witness to the event at Burton. Fortunately a lovely day with good ground and paddling conditions and 22 competitors from ten years old to – well, significantly older!

Mad! But, it was all good fun, in good spirit and camaraderie with a good day had by all. Well done to all those who took part. And for the summer watch out for the 'Go Paddlin' days being organised in all three regions across Central. West Midlands are just ahead of the game with a great day out planned for Saturday 17th May at Upton Warren Outdoor Centre. Try-a-boat, time trials and trade stands all on offer for only £5.00! info@ackers-adventure.co.uk



This dry start program has been drawn up around using ergos, fitballs, broom sticks and other resources in a session running from 3-4pm after school using a coach paid for out of the Canoe England money and supported by other club volunteers.

The club are already being contacted by other schools in the area to look into more school club link opportunities and developing a schools coaching program based around this dry start and a paddlepower progression.

Time to Listen course for Club Welfare Officers

When: 27th April **venue:** 1pm-5pm.

Where: Exeter Canoe Club.

Contact: Andy Davey PDO for the S. West

Email: Andy.davey@bcu.org.uk

Canoe England is coordinating courses to help clubs meet the current 'Safeguarding and Protecting Children' standards. The essential training for Club Welfare Officers is to attend an NSPCC Time to Listen workshop. A pre-requisite for attending the workshop is to have attended a Sports Coach UK Safeguarding and Protecting Children course (previously Good Practice and Child Protection) or equivalent.

TEAM NORTH



Ergo Challenge at Rose Bridge High School

On February 22nd Gareth Field and Ray Hudspith from Canoe England came into Rose Bridge High School in Wigan and held an Ergo Challenge for students in years nine, ten and eleven.

Although Rose Bridge High school is next to the Leeds Liverpool Canal, many of the students had no idea what a kayak or canoe looked like, or what is required to make it move!

Ray and Gareth set up a series of competitions for the students who are either participating in BTEC Sport or part of the Schools Princes Trust XL club to test their skill and speed against each other. Staff got involved too and everyone had a great time trying to beat Mr Floweths top score!

As a result, the PE department is really keen to get more involved with paddlesport and we are hoping to enter the national school bell boat event in June as well as look to involve students in trying out both canoeing and kayaking over the summer months.

Thank you Gareth and Ray for a great day.

HELEN SHARPLES

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Youth – National news

Paddlepower news

The orders for Paddlepower have been flooding into the BCU office. Over 45,000 young people have benefited from Paddlepower since its launch almost twelve months ago.

A big thank you to all the clubs, centres and coaches for all their support of the scheme.

January

Blackland Farm, a Girl Guiding UK activity centre ordered a massive 11,000 copies of Paddlepower Start. A great start to the New Year for Paddlepower and a great start for Girl Guiding UK.

February

Following a presentation on Paddlepower at a Centres Forum, PGL have decided to build some of their kayaking courses around Paddlepower Passport.

March

The Paddlepower coaches manual which is currently in a draft format, will be going to the final design stage.

April

Paddlepower laminated activity cards are due to be available!

Life is like a river

Life is like a river,
Born at its source,
Tumbling down a mountain range,
It's life in its path.

Life is like a river,
Gently meandering through time,
Your fate is decided,
Disaster or divine.

Life is like a river,
There's passages to find,
Undiscovered treasures,
Like nature and mankind.

Life is like a river,
Always flowing one way,
Your life is once and only,
Not a chance to be taken away.

Life is like a river,
Nearing its end,
Its youth is far behind it,
Its memories will end.

Life is like a river,
It's flowed many ways,
People have shaped it,
It's too late to start again.

Lucy Greehy (Age 13)

Cross stream challenge

A BCU award scheme 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 sign posts into Clubs where their skills and development can be nurtured.
- Provide a flexible structure for delivery according to venue/situation.

Paddlepower Start – an entry level award suitable for taster sessions or as part of a series of sessions. Prices start from 10p per certificate.

Paddlepower Passport – 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. Prices start from £1.80 per progress card.

Paddlepower Discover – this follows on from Passport with a further four levels to take the young paddler to equivalent of 2 Star standard. Prices start from £1.80 per progress card.

Paddlepower Explore – Supporting different levels takes the paddler on an extensive journey exploring

Resources

- Cross Stream Challenge booklet – £6.64.
- Cross Stream laminated activity cards – £9.75.
- A pack of 20 Cross Stream Certificates – £3.58.



Paddlesport DVD

'Do it now' promotional DVD prices start from £4.00. For more information please contact youth@bcu.org.uk or telephone 0845 370 9520. Visit the eshop at www.bcu.org.uk

the great variety of paddlesport, with topics focused on participation in events and journeys in the competitive and non-competitive disciplines. Prices start from £1.80 per progress card.

Paddlepower Excel – three levels to test the paddler on all elements of paddlesport including being responsible for self and others, participation in journeys, coaching sessions, training, events in a variety of disciplines, background knowledge of the sport; access, rules, environmental. Prices start from £1.80 per progress card.

A fantastic flexible paddlesport challenge

Aims to develop and challenge boat handling skills, strokes and moves, whilst blending slalom, freestyle, polo, with a touch of wild water and flat water racing maybe a bit of surf. Its flexibility in delivery focuses on the paddler, not just the boat, enabling paddlers to develop skills based around a

pre-determined course in managed and measured environment.

The challenge has been designed to fit in to a variety of environments. The challenge has the flexibility to be adapted for use on your local stretch of water.





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Clubs and regional news

Disabled to paddle their own canoe

A Bedfordshire project to engage disabled people in the sport of kayaking is underway thanks to a donation from local company Lafarge Aggregates.

Viking KC, Bedford's canoe and kayak club, supports both recreational and competitive kayaking and will put the £500 donation towards the cost of purchasing specially-designed equipment including canoes, buoyancy aids and wheelchair clamps.

Viking's disability spokesman Peter Smart said: "This is a really great start for our project. We're delighted with Lafarge's contribution and hope that other local companies will want to follow its example and donate to this very worthwhile project."

Lafarge Elstow quarry site manager Stuart McGrath said: "Lafarge is delighted to help the Viking Kayak Club and hope that many people from the community will enjoy and benefit from the new equipment."

Viking KC needs to raise a further £13,500 to complete the project.

Oxfordshire Paddlesport Development Team

At the Oxfordshire Coaching Panel AGM in January Rob Yates was elected as Local Coaching Organiser (LCO), where the panel also agreed to extend its remit to cover the development of paddlesport in the county and to align itself to the new structures of the BCU and the County Sports Partnerships. All clubs and organisations involved in paddlesport in the county are invited to participate. The panel want to share their learning, resources and experiences in order to increase the number of paddlers in all disciplines. They will call themselves the 'Oxfordshire Paddlesport Development Team' which better reflects their ambitions. They will continue to support coaching through courses, help with the new star tests and coaching qualifications but also intend to support new events that can engage and retain more people of all ages in our sport. The LCO will be supported by a treasurer and secretary and they hope all clubs will nominate individuals to the team who represent their particular interests. If you wish to contact them you can do so directly to the secretary alastair.wilson@eur.crowncork.com or through the Southern Region web site at <http://canoesouth.org/index.php?page=home> where they will post significant documents and publicise their events.



Keith Orridge of Express Park and Norman Taylor of the Yorkshire region agreeing the final positioning peg of the new canoe club building at Manvers Lake in Rotherham

YORCIE NEWS: www.yorcie.org.uk

People and clubs

Congratulations to Hull and District CC on gaining Top Club status and also to Bradford and Bingley CC who held the official opening of their new facility at Wagon Lane in March.

Many thanks to Bill Mercer who has supported the region wearing various caps over many years and good luck and thanks to Stuart Teale (already LCO for the East Riding) who now succeeds Bill as Chair. Stuart's email is lco@activeclaims.co.uk.

Another big thank you also goes to our web master Kate Wright who has serviced the region well over the last four years and established our web as a model.

On a much less pleasant note we send our thoughts to the family and friends of Clive Robinson who died on the River Crake in Cumbria. A most moving and courageous report on the day has been recorded by the group on the UK Rivers Guide pages.

We also hear of another tragedy closer to home on the River Calder. We will advise you of any learning outcomes from it. For now our thoughts again are with those involved and all the services who try so hard for us when it is needed.

Lets finish this section on a lighter note and wish the Country Landowners Association a happy 101st birthday.

Directory

I hope you all like the improved format of the new 2008 Members Directory. Will you check it and let me know of any alterations or additions please.

Facilities

March saw a flurry of activity with the new leases being signed for both Washburn and Waterfront Manvers and both brought about by huge volunteer effort and our own BCU Facilities Manager Chris Hawkesworth. We know most paddlers want to do just that, but where would we be without those who achieve more places for us to go? At the Washburn the 'in river work' is planned to fit in between the releases (please see www.yorcie.org.uk) and at

Waterfront Manvers (where there isn't yet any actual club building, see picture left) paddlers will have immediate access to the lake (from a safe but alternative route) whilst the building work is undertaken. An open meeting of all interested and potential new members of Waterfront Manvers CC is to be held on 21st April, email manvers@yorcie.org.uk

At Armlay in Leeds the EA are funding a study into work on the weirs and Leeds CC are involved in the plans. At Castleford Lock there are early plans for a new club and facility. The region needs particular help with this early plan. If someone in that neck of the woods can help please, contact me. All these

schemes have been supported by one particular volunteer who I now want to publicly embarrass by wishing a very happy 70th birthday, Norman.

The next few Washburn release cruise dates are April 6th, 20th, 28th; May 4th, 7th, 21st then Children's day on May 28th; June 7th, 8th, 18th, 22nd, and then the Yorkshire Champs on July 5th, 6th. This year also sees the start of paddlers using the top Reservoir Thruscross, for a whole range of events. Make a note of 29th June and 23rd July. If you would like to know more please also contact the Washburn secretary Esther on 01302 535941 or esther.mathews@btinternet.com. Check the YORCIE info line on 0845 833 8654 before you travel.

All clubs invitation

On Sunday May 18th our very own PDO Gareth, will be running an all clubs invited fun event, hosted by WRCC at Roundhay Park in Leeds. The emphasis is on a multi-event, come and try it day and whilst it is aimed at juniors and youths all the grown ups are equally welcome. Email gareth@bcu.org.uk for more info.

Coaching news

I know you are getting a bit fed up of me banging on about the region's 1,000 plus coaches. But I got a shock recently when I found out that only 400 had actually revalidated. A revalidated coach is someone who is in current membership with a current first-aid certificate and has done anyone of these options. Undertaken a training course in the last three years, (which could be if a Level 2 Coach took training at Level 3 say) or, had attended a revalidation update day, or, who has completed a self certified revalidation form. We know 250 have now registered with our regional coaching secretary Janet Cartwright. So do we have 150 who are valid and who haven't and 600 who haven't and won't? Maybe you would let us know. Revalidation days have been run to fulfil demand. The next is April 26th and 27th at Aldwark and Sept 28th at Pugnys. But there can be more if you let us know. And it doesn't have to be just revalidations.

The next coaches evening get-together, is being hosted by White Rose CC at 7.30 on Sunday Evening 28th September at Fearnville Sports Centre, Oakwood Lane, Leeds, LS8 3LF. Minutes of the last meeting and an agenda for the next can be obtained. Email Janet at paul@pcartwright.freesevice.co.uk or 01484 603126.

Webwise groups

Previously I have encouraged you to 'register' your particular interests via the web. Following a request for clarification on just how to do this John has done us our first noddies guide to YORCIE.

Go to www.yorcie.org.uk and click register on the right hand side under the log in box. Complete the form and hey presto you now have your user name and password for the YORCIE regional paddlesport development web site.

You can now log in to the site and click on the button 'Subscribe for Info' down on the left hand side under 'User Menu'. In the centre of the screen you can simply click subscribe to the newsletter(s) of your choice. It has the additional benefit of giving you the facility to add your own email address and change it, move it, or unsubscribe to it, as you wish. And remember the names and numbers of all the regions team are in the Directory. So if you want to call the YSBs see page 63. A full list of over 14 dates for Yorkshire Single Bladers can be found on the web.

The Yorkshire Sea Kayakers had a great start to their season on Feb 10th when in wonderful weather 16 of them did the 13 miles from Scarborough to Hayburn Wyke. Mike has set himself a goal of doing all our Yorkshire coast in bits, so future trips will be picked to make best use of weather and tides nearer the time.

This simple registration process, ensures swift email circulation without your address collecting a load of spam emails. Please don't be put off when you are asked to 'subscribe'. There is nothing to pay, but the system ensures security and allows ordinary volunteers with normal processing power to handle the group. It has the additional benefit of giving you the facility to add your own email address and change it, move it, or unsubscribe to it, as you wish.

If you'd like to know more, about the affairs of the region, please contact our regional secretary Jon on ldakevne@aol.com 18 Hayton Wood View, Aberford, Leeds, LS25 3AN tel. 0113 2250984. The dates of the next two RDT meetings are 28th April and the 23rd June. And the ACM is a month earlier than normal on Tuesday 28th October in Ossett. More of that later.

And finally

I usually finish with something that points you at www.yorcie.org.uk but I hesitate with this issue as the region's web site needs your help please. Somebody. It doesn't have to be just one, it can be a shared experience. Thank you.

However, if you want to have your event added please send an email to web_master@yorcie.co.uk please put 'web' in your subject so we can redirect it.

Please keep you news coming in. Thank you.

Dick.
dickconstable@canoeists.co.uk

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Clubs and regional news

EVENTS

Canoe Camping Club

Thames & South East Group

April 20: R. Thames and Oxford Canal circular tour

May 2-5: R. Thames at Lechlade

May 11: R. Wey from Weybridge

June 1: R. Mole

The group welcomes individuals and families as guest paddlers. Trips are normally 10-12 miles and suitable for open canoes and kayaks. A BCU sticker or navigation licence is required.

Contact: Robin Hickman on 01403 267244. Email Robin@rhickman.freereserve.co.uk

Local club gains £245,000

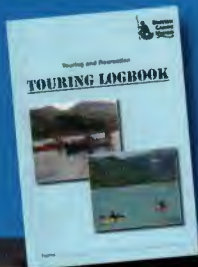
Sport England grant

The Yorkshire Dales Watersports Partnership which runs the centre at Grimwith Reservoir near Grassington, has been awarded £245,000 by Sport England. This much needed grant is a life line for the club, which faces closure if new permanent facilities cannot be built.

The new boathouse which will replace the current temporary structures, will be built from natural materials to blend into the picturesque landscape. The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant centre will include: training area, fully equipped changing rooms, shelter for participants and spectators, refreshment facilities and secure storage for safety boats.

David Gent, regional director for Sport England Yorkshire said: "Grimwith Reservoir is a fantastic location for watersports and the Yorkshire Dales Watersports Partnership does a great job of coordinating windsurfing, sailing, canoeing and kayaking at the facility. I want to see even more people of all abilities – from novices to experts – doing watersports at Grimwith long into the future. That's why Sport England is so pleased to be supporting the partnership to build the new boathouse."

Donations to the fundraising campaign can be made through the club web site at www.yorkshiredales.sc or by contacting the secretary at Secretary@yorkshiredales.sc



L to R: Robert Yeowell, Jeff Simmons, Paul Owen, Julia Barclay and Adrian Barclay

50 years of canoeing

It was an action packed year in 2007 as Lincoln CC celebrated 50 years of canoeing. When Dr. Lawrence Oliver joint founder and current chairman first made his way across the Brayford Pool in a home made Kayak, he could have only dreamt that 50 years later there would be such a thriving canoeing community in the city. The club still on its original site is now housed in a modern purpose build facility opened by HRH the Queen in 1996. Over the years the club and its members have achieved many notable canoeing successes both nationally and internationally. The club held the Hasler title between 1964-1967, a record which was to stand for 37 years.

The clubs celebrations started formally with its AGM held in the esteemed surroundings of Lincoln's historic Guildhall and presided upon by the Mayor of Lincoln. It was a great opportunity to raise the profile of canoeing in the city and of course there was bumper turnout.

In February the club held a special 50th anniversary dinner where the club was honoured to have Ian Wynne, Olympic 500m bronze medallist as guest speaker. Ian delivered a truly inspiration speech on how he overcame a late injury to for fulfil his

lifetime's dream. He is a credit to his sport and his presence made the evening very special.

Celebrations continued throughout the year with the club organising a pleasure boat trip along its normal six mile training route down the Fosse Dyke Canal. It's amazing how much more you can see when you not going flat out trying to catch the kayak in front.

The final social event involved a Ceilidh dance which was an opportunity to get family and friends together and reflect on events past and present. Irish dancing is like canoeing, it's fun all the time but much easier if you know what you're doing.

The club also commissioned a 50th anniversary set of clothing which I hope has not gone unnoticed at canoe regattas and marathons last year.

With membership figures up and the introduction of a junior development squad at the club, the future looks very positive for another fifty years canoeing for the Lincoln CC. If you would like to know more about the last 50 years at Lincoln CC visit our 50th anniversary section on our club site

www.lincolncanoeclub.co.uk

CHAS TONNER



Performance awards

The new BCU Paddlesport Performance Awards and Coaching Awards require you to provide evidence of your paddling experiences, including a variety of journeys, when you attend an assessment for the new BCU Paddlesport Awards. The BCU touring log book enables you to keep a record of all your paddling experiences and are available for purchase from the BCU e-shop (www.bcu.org.uk). This will enable you to provide evidence in any

future BCU paddlesport assessments you might take and starts you off in the BCU Touring Award Scheme. After 15 miles you will be awarded a certificate and a badge free of charge. There are further Touring Awards for paddling various distances over 100, 250 and 500 miles in a year. As well as the cumulative awards if you paddle over 1,000, 2,500 and 5,000 miles over any time period.

The BCU Inter-Club Touring Award 2007

The BCU Inter-club Touring Award Shield is awarded annually to the BCU Affiliated Club, whose members have collectively paddled the most miles in that year. Each club member is awarded a point for each mile they have paddled as well as extra points for any personal touring award they receive. These points are then added together to make the club's total entry into this inter-club competition, for that year.

The Inter-Club Touring Award Shield is now in its 19th year, and

the winner for 2007 was Westel CC. Adrian Barclay announced the results of this competition, whilst Paul Owen, Chief Executive of the BCU presented the shield to Jeff Simmons of Westel CC, at CanoeExpo in February.

Robert Yeowell, received the silver award on behalf of the Canoe Camping Club – Thames and South East region and Julia Barclay received the bronze award on behalf of Purley CC.

A variety of members from the participating clubs were present at the award ceremony as well as a large number of people visiting CanoeExpo. We would like to encourage more clubs and club members to participate in the BCU Inter-club Touring Trophy and the Touring Awards in general. If you would like more information please visit the BCU web site or contact Adrian Barclay the BCU Touring Awards Administrator on abarclaypcc@btinternet.com.

ADRIAN BARCLAY

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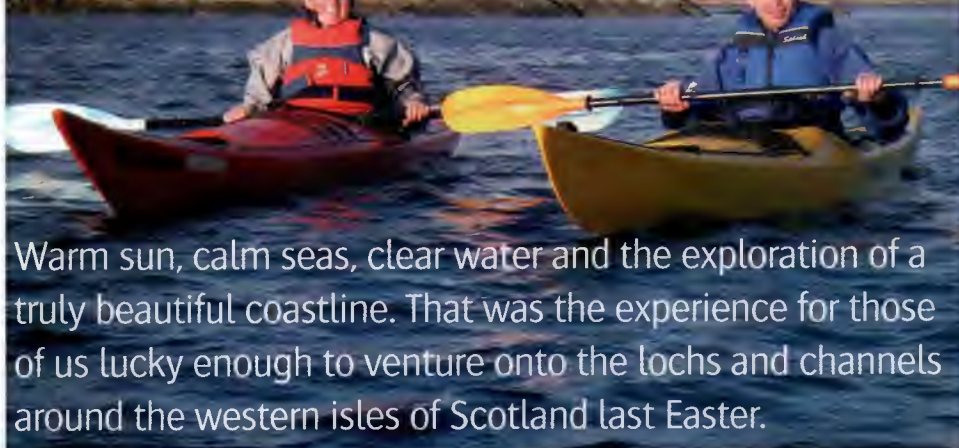
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Loch Sunart at Easter



Warm sun, calm seas, clear water and the exploration of a truly beautiful coastline. That was the experience for those of us lucky enough to venture onto the lochs and channels around the western isles of Scotland last Easter.

BY NICK PEARSON

It has become a tradition with a particular group of friends that we go to Scotland for Easter and our trips have been based around our shared hobbies of walking, climbing and, more latterly, sea kayaking. In previous years our Easter weekends have been filled with long trips and wild camps or possibly the odd night in a bothy. This time, however, our plans had to take in the fact that we had a new addition to the posse. Being only 12 months old, Kate wasn't too keen on long multi day sea kayak journeys and her parents suggested a compromise – a base from where we could do day paddles and return to the cottage for the evening. This turned out to be no compromise at all as we chose to stay on Carna.

Carna is a beautiful and remote island in the middle of Loch Sunart, between the mainland east of Mull and the Ardnamurchan Peninsula, right in the middle of prime sea kayaking country. Added to this was the fact that our cottage could comfortably sleep eight and even come with its own jetty, made this an ideal location for an Easter week.

We found that there were plenty of opportunities for day paddles around Loch Sunart, despite the unfavourable tides that went with the Easter week this year. Notably this meant a little forward planning for a trip around neighbouring Oronsay as the channel separating the island from the mainland was only really navigable around high tide. Nearby Loch Teacuis and the channels and inlets around Carna and Oronsay actually turned out to be a fantastic, sheltered playground, busy with seals, herons and lots of other wildlife. Ideal places for a leisurely evening paddle.

The coast of Moidart

As we left our vans on the mainland at Glen Borrodale we also had the opportunity to drive up the coast with the kayaks to explore some other nearby areas. Our first paddle away from Sunart took us on a 25km trip down the coast of Moidart. We put in at a sandy cove just west of Glenuig (left off the A861 at Glenuig, signposted for Smearisary). Following the coast south from there took us past some stunning scenery, with superb views of Rum, Muck and Eigg off to our right on the skyline. After a while, the small island of An Glas-Eilean and its associated skerries produced a sheltered

bay where a pair of curious grey seals popped up to see what we were doing. We chose a nearby deserted, white sandy beach as our lunch spot; I don't think I've ever had lunch anywhere nicer. Just beyond this, a small inlet snaked its way around the northernmost tip of Eilean Shona, the island that sits in the middle of Loch Moidart. At slack water, this inlet is benign and offers a way into the north channel of Loch Moidart which bounds Shona on its northern side – a dark and isolated stretch of water. At the far end of the loch, a narrow channel can offer the paddler a way through to Kinlochmoidart at high tide. However, this was nothing but mud at low tide when we were there. After exploring this loch for a while, we paddled back out of the channel where the flow against us was increasing with the incoming tide. We did right not to spend any more time exploring. The western coast of Shona provided us with some slightly more challenging conditions and an inescapable coastline. Still, some skerries at half-way gave us the opportunity for a rest and a little play before we rounded the corner into the southern channel of Loch Moidart - Suddenly we were in a different world. Calm seas and a small tidal push welcomed us into a verdant and open inlet with the picturesque ruined Castle Tioram at its far end. The incoming tide further helped us with our passage up the tidal River Moidart to our rendezvous with Kate and her mum at Kinlochmoidart (and an exceptionally muddy riverbank).

Arisaig

For our second paddle away from Sunart we chose to drive up to Mallaig and explore the coastline down as far as Arisaig. This 19km trip took us past countless white sandy beaches, skerries and islets. The sandy sea bed and clear water gave this paddle an almost Caribbean feel and the possibilities for playing around between the rocks seemed endless. The mountains of Knoydart towered to our left, Rum, Muck and Eigg were ever-present to our right and the Skye Cullins were behind us, I'm not sure it can get any better than this. The first part of the paddle out from Mallaig isn't so



pretty though. Mallaig is a working fishing and ferry port and is characterised by tall concrete harbour walls, large fishing boats and a thin veneer of oil on the water. We put in at a rocky beach just beyond the ferry pier, not an ideal spot, as the kayaks had to be manhandled over the slippery foreshore – not an easy task with a large double kayak! Still, it was an easier prospect than using the jetty which apparently was slippier than greased Teflon – one of our party nearly had to be rescued! The view changed as soon as we left Mallaig and the feeling of remoteness increased as we paddled away from the road that hugged the shore. The overcast sky made the coastline seem especially bleak but happily the sun shone on us for our chosen lunch spot, Portnaluchaig, where Kate and her Dad met us for a beach picnic. There is a tidal channel that can provide a shortcut to Arisaig from here but it was dry when we investigated it so we embarked on the longer paddle around the headland. This seemed surprisingly slow but on rounding the headland we picked up the flow of the incoming tide and we were swept effortlessly into the pretty haven of Arisaig and the end of our paddle.

This has to be one our best Scottish Easter trips to date, the young Kate is already insisting that we go back next year. ●



Around Carna



The Bismark and Carna House



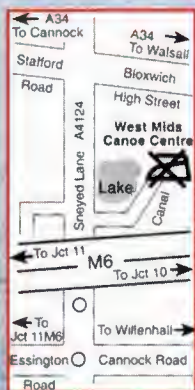
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BCU PHOTOGRAPH C



January adult winner –
Glynn Carter

February adult winner –
Sam Baker

The winners for January and February
(as voted by you)

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Glynn Carter

JANUARY YOUTH WINNER

Fred Risey

FEBRUARY ADULT WINNER

Sam Baker

FEBRUARY YOUTH WINNER

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January youth winner –
Fred Risey



COMPETITION

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HOW TO ENTER

Send your photos in jpeg format via email to chloe.nelson-lawrie@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. Please also include:

- where the photo was taken (name of river/lake/stream and location)
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PRIZES: MONTHLY WINNER

A winner will be chosen each month until December 2008. 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 chloe.nelson-lawrie@bcu.org.uk

OVERALL WINNER

At the end of January 2009 one overall winner from the youth category and one winner from the adult category will win a digital camera worth £150!

PHOTO QUALITY

The images should be a minimum of five megapixels if possible.

Terms and conditions

By entering the competition The British Canoe Union will be entitled to use your photograph to promote canoeing, without needing to obtain your permission. By submitting your photograph/s you agree to grant the BCU a perpetual, royalty-free, non-exclusive, sub-licensable right and licence to use, reproduce, modify, adapt, publish, translate, create derivative works from, distribute and exercise all copyright and publicity rights with respect to your photograph/s worldwide and/or to incorporate your photograph/s in other works in any media now known or later developed for the full term of any rights that may exist in your photograph/s.

By submitting your photograph/s to BCU, you warrant that your photograph/s is/are your own original work and that you have the right to make it/them available to the BCU for all the purposes specified above; and does/do not infringe any law.

We will only accept images as taken and will not accept any image that has been re-mastered or which are montages. The British Canoe Union will not be able to return any images. Wherever used, we agree to credit your images to you. We reserve the right to crop the images as we see fit. This competition is open to UK residents only. Overseas entries will not be considered.

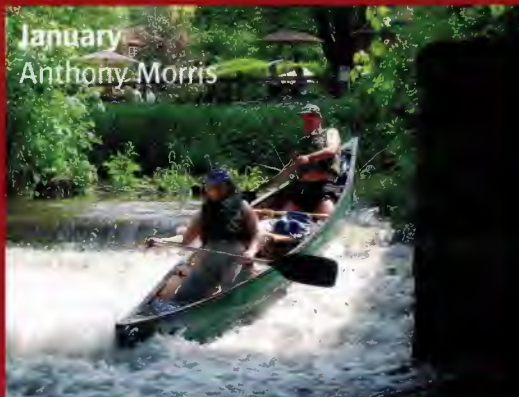
Collective Editor's announcement of the winner is final and no correspondence will be entered into. The prize(s) must be taken as stated and cannot be deferred. There will be no cash alternatives. The BCU does not accept any responsibility for late or lost entries due to the Internet. Proof of sending is not proof of receipt. No responsibility is accepted for ineligible entries or entries made fraudulently.

This competition is not open to employees of the BCU, any person directly or indirectly involved in the BCU or the running of the competition, or their direct family members. The BCU reserves the right to cancel this competition at any stage, if deemed necessary in its opinion, and if circumstances arise outside of its control. Where photos of people are submitted, you agree to having the consent of those people wherever possible and if applicable (i.e. members of the general public). If children are featured the consent of their parents/guardians is needed.

Prizes unclaimed after 28 days will be deemed to have been forfeited and the BCU reserves the right to either offer the prize to the entrant whose name is next drawn at random, or to re-offer the prize in any future competition on the BCU.

Entrants will be deemed to have accepted these rules and to agree to be bound by them when entering this competition. This includes entries made via email.

We reserve the right not to publish images that are submitted and to edit the comments that accompany the image. The site editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.



February
Chris Wood





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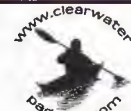
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Chief Instructor at Mill on the Brue Outdoor Centre, Somerset.

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Due to a restructuring of our management team Mill on the Brue is looking to appoint a Chief Instructor to join us as soon as possible.

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The successful candidate will hold a minimum of BCU (or UKCC) Level 2 Coach (as well as relevant safety and skill awards), SPA and or ML Summer. We also require the successful candidate to have relevant Centre experience, a mature approach, have organisational and people skills, be an effective communicator, have a flexible and adaptable working approach, display efficient interpersonal skills and be a team player.

For an application pack with job description including details of pay and conditions contact Louise Burrell on 01749 812307 or email: personnel@millonthebrue.co.uk.

Alternatively you can download this on our website under the jobs section on www.millonthebrue.co.uk

All positions are subject to a clear Enhanced Disclosure Criminal Records Bureau check.

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Part three of a series highlighting European paddling escapes for all the family by Dave Halsall

The Swedish Lake District

Travelling to and through Dalsland

We call Såve, Gothenburg's northern airport, the tin shed and we love it. It is a modern, metal building and we love it because it is small, so small that from picking up your bags off the carousel it only takes one breath to get to the outside of the building and also because it is the gateway to so many trips and adventures in the Swedish wilderness. Ryanair fly into Såve quite regularly from destinations in the UK.

Hire cars are readily available but there is also an airport bus that links into the main railway station in Gothenburg. Canodal, the canoe outfitter we have been using for a number of years, is based at Ed, and Ed is on the mainline from Sweden to Norway, so if you are lucky enough to be able to get one of the through trains, you can be up there in a matter of 90 minutes. From the station it is only a short walk down the hill to the lake but it does give you the chance to have a look at the view up the lake. Stora Le is a long lake; it takes a few days of hard paddling to paddle from Ed in the south to the northern most point at Töcksfors. It is wide at points and there are many bays, islands and coves to explore along the way. It is a highway to many tours and you can even journey into Norway and back.

At Canodal there is the normal gear and equipment to hire and there is also a great supermarket for food supplies.

This is a one-stop shop as there is very little

opportunity to spend money once you're on the lake. The canoes are aluminium, fine for the granite gravel shores, and they come with wooden paddles and a buoyancy aid. You can also hire barrels, tents, stoves, sleeping mats etc.

You can paddle from the centre but there are many tours in the area and Bertil, the owner, will drop you off or pick you up for a charge.

Once out in the canoes your world is the canoe and the lake, your tent and the campsite. Stora Le can offer intimate paddling in the bays, coves and around the islands and great expanses of water with the associated views. It can be tranquil and it can be aggressive in calm and storm. There is a mass of nature to view, especially pine, birch, and rock but there are gems such as the glimpse of a peregrine, the flash of a pike in the reeds and picking berries in the autumn.



There are designated camping sites that have huts, composting loos, fire pits and free wood. There is a nominal charge for journeying in the area but this ensures that the campsites are well tended by the rangers.

The best times to travel are May, May/June Bank Holiday, August and September because during June and July it is the Swedish holidays. In May and June everything is fresh but the lakes are cool, swimmable but cool. September is the berry season and the lakes are at their warmest.

Dalsland is a great area to explore and an easily accessible area for wilderness travel and especially useful for training before trying something more remote like some areas of Canada. Please go and smell the pine. ●

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