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## focus



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**Canoe Focus**  
The official magazine  
of the  
**British Canoe Union**  
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Nottingham NG13 8AP  
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E-mail: info@bcu.org.uk  
www.bcu.org.uk  
ISBN 0953-010X

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#### Annual Subscription Rates

UK inland: £19.00

Overseas: £24.50

Free to BCU members

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the BCU on the above contacts

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#### Front cover photo:

Clockwise: Campbell Walsh,  
Fiona Pennie and David Florence.

All members of slalom Team GB

Photo: David Leathborough

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Comment by Paul Owen, Chief Executive

## Welcome to June's issue of Canoe Focus

It has been a busy time of year for those involved in competitive canoeing. There have been the slalom selection events, flat water racing selection events, Slalom European Championships and Flat Water Racing European Championships among others.

Congratulations to the GB team members who medalled at these international events.

### Slalom European Championships, Krakow, Poland 11-13th May

Campbell Walsh has achieved his ambition of winning a gold medal and a major title at an international event. Men's K1 30 year-old Walsh went from sixth position in the semi-finals to first in the finals, securing the gold, an outstanding performance.

The event doubled up as Olympic selection, but unfortunately the C2s (canoe doubles) did not qualify a boat for GB in Beijing.

### Flat Water Racing European Championships, Milan Italy 16-18th May

Congratulations to Tim Brabants who won gold in the Men's K1 1000m event, a fantastic result considering the tough competition. Tim clinched the win on the line in an exciting, tight finish, winning in a time of 3.33.4 ahead of Hungary's Kucsera (3.33.5) and Germany's Max Hoff (3.34.9). It was unfortunate that Tim did not make the 500m final, but an issue with the start gate meant that a win would be near impossible and he came fourth in the 500m semi-final.

Big congratulations also goes to Lucy Wainwright who also gained a European title, by winning the Women's K1 200m event, which is not an Olympic event, but demonstrates her outstanding form. Lucy won the 200m in a time of 41.399 seconds ahead of Hungary's Inna Osypenko - Radomska (41.607) and Poland's Dorota Kuczowska (42.471).

A fifth place in the Women's K1 500m secured Lucy a place in the Beijing Games.

### Olympic teams Slalom

The slalom team was officially announced by the BCU and the BOA on Wednesday 21st May. The team pictured above right consists of: Fiona Pennie (Women's K1), Campbell Walsh (Men's K1) and David Florence (Men's C1).

### Flat water racing

GB flat water racing will be competing in the following events at Beijing: Men's K1 1000m, Men's K1 500m, Women's K1 500m. The other events that GB will be competing in will be announced with the official Team GB announcement at the end of June.

### Broxbourne

The London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games (LOCOG) have confirmed that the venue for the canoe/kayak slalom events will be at the Showground in Broxbourne, Hertfordshire. After the Games, the venue will be developed to become the white water canoe centre in Broxbourne, delivering a leisure attraction for canoeing and white water rafting as well as a major competition venue for elite events. The centre will be managed by the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority (LVRPA), who own the land.

It is also good to see that more facilities and places to paddle are being developed elsewhere, namely the projects taking place at: Manvers lake, Symonds Yat and the Washburn.



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:

- 7-10th August
- 6-9th November

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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@canoeofocus.co.uk](mailto:peter@canoeofocus.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 JULY 2008**.

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# Competition calendar

	Start	Finish	Discipline	Event		Start	Finish	Discipline	Event
June	5-Jun	7-Jun	Sprint Racing	World Cup 1 - Szeged, HUN	July	12-Jul	13-Jul	Slalom	Orton Mere - Div 3 and 4
	5-Jun	8-Jun	Wild Water Racing	World Championships - Ivrea, ITA		12-Jul	13-Jul	Canoe Sailing	Carsington
	7-Jun		Freestyle	Youth Series - Teesside		13-Jul		Local Event	Norfolk Island - Open Boat Race - Ullswater
	7-Jun		Slalom	Alva Short Course - Div 4		13-Jul		Marathon Racing	Leaside
	7-Jun	8-Jun	Sprint Racing	National Regatta - HPP, Nottingham		13-Jul		Marathon Racing	Soar Valley
	7-Jun	8-Jun	Slalom	HPP, Nottingham - Premier and Div 1 - Pan Celtic Cup		13-Jul		Marathon Racing	Pangbourne
	7-Jun	8-Jun	Slalom	Sowerby Bridge - Div 3 and 4		13-Jul		Marathon Racing	Northwich Lightning Race 3
	13-Jun	15-Jun	Sprint Racing	World Cup 2 - Duisburg, GER		14-Jul		Wild Water Racing	Nene - Div B and Wavehopper
	13-Jun	15-Jun	Slalom	European Senior Cup - Roztokey u Krivoklatu, CZE		16-Jul		Marathon Racing	Lowport Summer Series - 10km
	14-Jun		Sprint Racing	Wokingham/Reading Grand Prix Junior Sprints		17-Jul	20-Jul	Sprint Racing	European Championships - Under 23 & Juniors - Szeged, HUN
	14-Jun	15-Jun	Wild Water Racing	World Cup 1 and 2 - Karlovy Vary, CZE		19-Jul	20-Jul	Slalom	Washburn - Div 1 and 2 - Yorkshire Water Championships
	14-Jun	15-Jun	Marathon Racing	World Cup - Brandenburg, GER		20-Jul		Marathon Racing	Thames Valley
	14-Jun	15-Jun	Slalom	Fairnilee - Div 2, 3 and 4		21-Jul	27-Jul	Canoe Polo	World Championships - Edmonton, CAN
	14-Jun	15-Jun	Slalom	Stone Town Council Cup - Div 3 and 4		21-Jul	27-Jul	Freestyle	European Championships - Ourense, ESP
	14-Jun	15-Jun	Canoe Sailing	Ullswater		24-Jul	27-Jul	Slalom	World Championships - Juniors - Roudnice nad Labem, CZE
	14-Jun	15-Jun	Surf	St Ives - Plastic		26-Jul		Surf	HP Series 3 & World Cup Q4 - Newquay - Re Run
	15-Jun		Sprint Racing	Scottish Sprint Championships		26-Jul		Local Event	York River Festival Canoe Race
	15-Jun		Marathon Racing	Northwich Lightning Race 2		26-Jul	27-Jul	Slalom	Harefield - Div 3 and 4
	15-Jun		Marathon Racing	Oxford Falcon Midsummer Marathon		28-Jul	29-Jul	Wild Water Racing	Tryweryn - Youth
	15-Jun		Marathon Racing	Bristol		2-Aug		Marathon Racing	Bath to Bradford
	15-Jun		Marathon Racing	Royal		2-Aug	3-Aug	Canoe Polo	Welsh International
15-Jun		Marathon Racing	Leighton Buzzard	3-Aug		Marathon Racing	Medway		
15-Jun		Coach Update	Somerset - South West	3-Aug		Marathon Racing	Inverness		
15-Jun		Marathon Racing	Burton	3-Aug		Marathon Racing	Bradford Circuit		
18-Jun		Marathon Racing	Lowport Summer Series - 10km	3-Aug		Marathon Racing	Reading K4 A		
21-Jun		Coach Update	Norfolk - East	10-Aug		Marathon Racing	Reading K4 A		
21-Jun		Wild Water Racing	Conwy Ascent	10-Aug		Marathon Racing	Ironbridge		
21-Jun		Marathon Racing	Conwy Ascent	11-Aug	14-Aug	Slalom	Olympic Games - Beijing, CHN		
21-Jun	22-Jun	Slalom	World Cup 1 - Prague, CZE	13-Aug		Marathon Racing	Lowport Summer Series - 10km		
21-Jun	22-Jun	Wild Water Racing	World Cup 3 and 4 - Lofer, AUT	14-Aug	17-Aug	Slalom	Llandysul - Div 3 and 4 - River Festival		
21-Jun		Surf	HP Series 3 & World Cup Q4 - Newquay	15-Aug	17-Aug	Freestyle	World Cup 1 - Prague, CZE		
21-Jun	22-Jun	Slalom	Cardington - Div 2 and 3 - British Youth and Veterans Championships	16-Aug		Marathon Racing	Cardiff Bay		
22-Jun		Wild Water Racing	Chester Dee - Div B and Wavehopper	16-Aug	17-Aug	Slalom	Fairnilee - Div 2, 3 and 4 - Youth Scottish Championships		
22-Jun		Sprint Racing	Kirkcaldy Regatta	16-Aug	19-Aug	Canoe Sailing	Dale - Nationals		
22-Jun		Marathon Racing	Exe Circuit	17-Aug		Sprint Racing	Broadwood Regatta		
22-Jun		Marathon Racing	Derwent	18-Aug	23-Aug	Sprint Racing	Olympic Games - Beijing, CHN		
22-Jun		Marathon Racing	Hereford	22-Aug	24-Aug	Freestyle	World Cup 2 - Augsburg, GER		
27-Jun	29-Jun	Sprint Racing	World Cup 3 - Poznan, POL	23-Aug	24-Aug	Slalom	Grandtully - Div 1 and 2		
28-Jun		Marathon Racing	Royal Paddling Challenge	23-Aug	24-Aug	Marathon Racing	National Championships - Worcester		
28-Jun	29-Jun	Slalom	World Cup 2 - Tacen, SLO	29-Aug	31-Aug	Freestyle	World Cup 3 - Thun, SUI		
28-Jun	29-Jun	Slalom	Sheperton - Div 3 and 4	30-Aug		Slalom	Alva Short Course - Div 3 and 4		
28-Jun	29-Jun	Slalom	Howsham Weir - Div 2 and 3 - Yorkshire Club Championships	30-Aug	31-Aug	Slalom	Nene White Water Course - Dive 2, 3 and 4		
28-Jun	29-Jun	Marathon Racing	Cheshire Ring	30-Aug	31-Aug	Canoe Polo	London International		
29-Jun		Marathon Racing	Thruscross - Round the Lake Race - Harrogate, Yorkshire	31-Aug		Sprint Racing	Kirkcaldy Regatta		
29-Jun		Marathon Racing	Shropshire	31-Aug		Marathon Racing	Adlington		
29-Jun		Marathon Racing	Wey	31-Aug		Marathon Racing	Calder 2		
July	4-Jul	6-Jul	Wild Water Racing	European Championships - Juniors - Valtellina, ITA	Canoe polo : <a href="http://www.canoe polo.org.uk">www.canoe polo.org.uk</a>				
	5-Jul		Wild Water Racing	Washburn - Div B - Youth	Canoe sailing: <a href="http://www.intcanoe.org.uk">www.intcanoe.org.uk</a>				
	5-Jul	6-Jul	Slalom	World Cup 3 - Augsburg, GER	Flat water racing:				
	5-Jul	6-Jul	Sprint Racing	National Regatta - HPP, Nottingham	Visit BCU, then 'Disciplines' and 'Flat water racing'				
	5-Jul	6-Jul	Canoe Polo	Hull International	Freestyle: <a href="http://www.ukfreestyle.com">www.ukfreestyle.com</a>				
	6-Jul		Freestyle	Youth Series - Nene	Marathon racing: <a href="http://www.marathon-canoeing.co.uk">www.marathon-canoeing.co.uk</a>				
	6-Jul		Slalom	Washburn - Div 2 - Yorkshire Champs	Slalom: <a href="http://www.canoeslalom.co.uk">www.canoeslalom.co.uk</a>				
	7-Jul	8-Jul	Coach Update	CoachFest - Anderton Centre - North West	Surf: <a href="http://www.bcusurf.org.uk">www.bcusurf.org.uk</a>				
	11-Jul	13-Jul	Slalom	Pre World Championships - La Seu de Urgell, ESP	Wild water racing: <a href="http://www.wildwater.org.uk">www.wildwater.org.uk</a>				
	11-Jul	13-Jul	Slalom	European Championships - Under 23 & Juniors - Solkan, SLO					
12-Jul		Sprint Racing	Royal Junior Sprint Regatta						
12-Jul	13-Jul	Marathon Racing	World Cup - Crestuma, POR						

## 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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:andy.goodsell@bcu.org.uk)



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Cornwall Canoes, Newquay  
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Outdoor Active Ltd, Gloucestershire  
Performance Kayaks, Weston-Super-Mare  
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## 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](mailto:chloe.nelson-lawrie@bcu.org.uk) or call 0845 370 9500

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**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 prizes**

(one prize per entry)...

X1 Craft Pro Zero short sleeved thermal (white)

X1 Craft t shirt (black)

X1 Craft running shorts (black)

Good luck!

**Closing date is 30th June.**

Send your answers to [chloe.nelson-lawrie@bcu.org.uk](mailto:chloe.nelson-lawrie@bcu.org.uk) and state your size (small, medium, large or extra large)

The actual product received may vary slightly in size or colour from photographs shown.

For your chance to win...

**Simply answer the following question:** When do the Beijing Olympics start?





## UK River Rescue Symposium returns

On the weekend of the 8-9th March an impressive team of providers gathered in Llangollen for the first River Rescue Symposium held in the UK for over 12 years. It brought together a number of the top coaches in the UK including Franco Ferrero, Peter Knowles, Jules Bernard, Dino Heald, Bob Timms, Jon and Lowri Davies, Dave Rossiter, Ray Goodwin, Dave Luke, Ali Marshall and Allan Ellard. The event was organised by Stuart Woodward, the director of Canoe Control, the company hosting the event.

Over 50 very keen paddlers arrived on Saturday morning raring to get learning. To kick off, there was an introduction and lecture by Bob Timms and Franco Ferrero. After an early lunch, followed by workshops covering everything from advanced rope skills to first aid for paddlers.

There were also sessions on rescue equipment and boat outfitting; most of which were based in the warm and dry of Llangollen's leisure centre.

As soon as the second days' workshops were on the sign up board, a scrum emerged which would have done a rugby International proud.

The 'Paddler's Question Time' was a great success. Things got a little heated at times but this made for some good discussion. Afterwards Mark Rainsley made a very useful talk about Post Traumatic Stress.

During the evening everybody made great use of the mobile bar that Stuart had hired in and when it came to rounding up the evening Allan Ellard stepped in with a fantastic talk about his recent trips to Arundel Pradesh in NW India. It was then back to the bar for everybody to chat about their next adventure.

Early Sunday morning everybody gathered in the cafe at Mile End Mill. Most of the workshops were very much water based with half-day sessions working on the ideas presented the day before. There were kayak and canoe skill sessions as well as rope work, incident management and some great first aid sessions.

The day ended back in the cafe after all the sessions had come to an end and everyone had dried off. The providers and participants were brought together for a summary of the event. There was a great deal of enthused people chatting and truly excited by the weekend. There were lots of thanks to the organiser and the team and lots of encouragement for Stuart from Canoe Control to make it an annual event.



## Usk and upper River Wye canoe access agreement

An editorial footnote was omitted from the above article published in Canoe Focus No 171 for April 2008 that noted:

The BCU (to include the Welsh Canoe Association and Canoe England) as the national governing body for canoeing was not consulted on the process to finalise the access arrangements for the Usk and Upper River Wye. The British Outdoor Professional Association does not represent the BCU on access policy and agreements or any other canoeing issues. The River Wye Navigation Order 2002 is indeterminate as to whether there is or is not a public right of navigation to exist on the River Wye and its tributaries above Hay on Wye. There is strong evidence both in terms of historical use and statute to suggest a public right of navigation exists.

The BCU recognises the Environment Agency (EA) has set a benchmark for voluntary access agreements on the River Waveney where there is all year access subject to environmental conditions and the EA has not applied this new standard to the Usk and Upper Wye.

## Sport England takes sport to the corridors of Westminster

As mentioned in the last edition of Canoe Focus, we are one of the few organisations to be linked up with an MP in the Sport England MP fellowship scheme. Peter Bottomley is the MP who we have the pleasure of hosting over the next few months.

Peter has already met with Brian Chapman Chairman of the BCU, David Gent Chairman of Canoe England, Paul Owen Chief Executive of the BCU and Tamsin Phipps of the Rivers Access Campaign. He reiterated during the meeting that he was not only very keen to find out more about the sport of canoeing and how our organisation works, but also to promote our sport and the Rivers Access Campaign.

Peter came to Nottingham in May and met the slalom team, met members of World Class Olympic Podium Programmes and paddled down the White Water Course at Holme Pierpont. He also went to Leaside, Hackney to see how canoeing has helped to change the lives of people in that area.

We will keep you up to date with how Peter spends the rest of his time with Canoe England and the BCU.

### EVENTS

#### River Usk canoe race Sunday 7th September

**Start:** Newbridge on Usk  
**Finish:** St. Julian's Hotel, Newport  
**Distance:** Eight miles  
**Start time:** 11.30 hrs  
Everyone welcome. For details contact:  
Alan Baker  
20, Larkfield Close, Caerleon, S.Wales.  
NP18 3EX. Tel 01633 421629  
Email: uskrace@croesy canoe.co.uk  
Web: www.croesy canoe.co.uk

#### Pyranha Festival 20-21st September

Pyranha has been busy putting together an event 'For enthusiasts, by enthusiasts!' The first ever Pyranha Festival will take place at the National Whitewater Centre near Bala in North Wales.

There will be coaching for varying skill levels over the weekend led by Tom Parker Coaching, Chris Eastabrook and Chris Milbank who are all Team Pyranha paddlers (more coaches will be announced on [www.pyranha.com](http://www.pyranha.com)).

In on the sessions will be other members of Team Pyranha giving you the chance to paddle with some of the world's best kayakers whilst being taught on the water.

As well as the coaching, there will be safety classes led by Dave Rossiter throughout the weekend, lectures about how to plan an expedition and survive when you're out there,

As well as photography tutorials and competitions, the Pyranha demo fleet will be available throughout the weekend and on the Saturday evening there will be films from the Whitewater Warriors and music with a BBQ.

The best thing about the weekend will be the chance to get the first look at the new 2009 kayaks Pyranha are adding into their range and if you are already a Pyranha paddler, then Pyranha are paying the water fees of everyone in a Pyranha kayak.  
[www.pyranha.com](http://www.pyranha.com)

## EVENTS

### Touch the Water Tour 2008

Perception and Nova Craft demos will be available to test with their trained staff on hand to advise on boat selection at all this year's major test events and other carefully selected venues throughout 2008. So far they are confirmed at the following events:

**21-22 June:** Cardiff Action Festival

**5-6 July:** Paddle Round The Pier, Brighton, [www.paddleroundthepier.com](http://www.paddleroundthepier.com). Plus the Perception Scooter Challenge, Perception Pier2Pier2Pier race and other activities.

**6 July:** Brookbank Open Day, Sale Water Park, Cheshire, [www.brookbankcanoes.co.uk](http://www.brookbankcanoes.co.uk):

**25-27 July:** Game Fair, Blenheim, Perception and Nova Craft Canoe Village display event.

Keep our checking their web sites: [www.perception.co.uk](http://www.perception.co.uk) and [www.novacraftuk.com](http://www.novacraftuk.com) for additions to their 'Touch the Water Tour'.

### Open Canoe Symposium

**14-16th November 2008**

The Open Canoe Symposiums have been running for a number of years now. This year it is the turn of England to hold the English Canoe Symposium. This is the third English Symposium and promises to develop on the successes of the previous events. The event will run at Lakeside centre on Windermere.

This year we have demo boats from Nova Craft, Wee-No-Nah, Mad River, Evergreen, Canoe Spirit and Mohawk along with trade stalls from Brookbank, Pro Adventure and other companies.

Sessions will run all weekend by the UK's leading coaches and will be aimed for the complete novice through to the more experienced paddler. With opportunities to learn anything paddling related from sailing through to bushcraft and advanced river trips.

Guest speakers and coaches will be supporting the event, bringing their experiences to the sessions and sharing their adventures with us.

For detailed information on booking please check out [www.canoesymposium.co.uk](http://www.canoesymposium.co.uk) or contact Lakeside direct.

### Cancer Research UK

A quick note to say that the editor of Canoe Focus, Peter Tranter, will be competing in a half ironman triathlon on July 26th at Trentham Gardens. He will be raising money for the Cancer Research UK charity and is hoping to collect £1,500 or more. You can sponsor him by emailing [peter@canoefocus.co.uk](mailto:peter@canoefocus.co.uk) or alternatively through 'justgiving', where if you are a UK taxpayer, an extra 28% in tax will be added to your gift at no cost to you. The service is simple, fast and totally secure: [www.justgiving.com/petetranter](http://www.justgiving.com/petetranter).

*"Many thanks for your support and to those who have already donated. I really appreciate it. Training is well underway and going to plan for the moment"* said Peter.

# Lough Neagh Canoe Trail launched

Lough Neagh, the largest lake in Britain and Ireland will soon be home to the Lough Neagh Canoe Trail. April marked the launch of the trail where canoeists are able to explore the numerous bays and inlets around the lough or the vast expanse of open water whilst observing the diversity of wildlife and historical sites.

Circumnavigating the lough, the trail offers a range of access points on the mainland and on both Coney and Ram's Island. The trail is suitable for canoeists of all abilities. Experts can utilise the official canoe trail guide – a comprehensive waterproof guide containing information on the seven designated access points and useful content on wildlife, flora and fauna and camping etc. Beginners can take to the water for the first time by choosing from a wide variety of canoeing providers offering a range of instruction, guided tours and canoe hire. All the information contained in the guide is also available in an interactive format on [www.canoeni.com](http://www.canoeni.com).

The trail links the existing Blackwater Canoe Trail flowing into the lough and the Lower

Bann Canoe Trail flowing out. In the future the proposed reopening of the Ulster Canal may also link canoeists to the trail, whilst the Strangford Lough Canoe Trail will complete the suite with a launch in late June.



The trails have been developed by the Countryside Access and Activities Network (CAAN), Lough Neagh Partnership and the Canoe Association for Northern Ireland (CANI).

The trail was launched at Ballyronan Marina, a perfect example of the infrastructure along the trail and one of the seven designated access points. Each access point hosts an interpretive panel detailing information on the local area. A full range of literature on the Lough Neagh region is also available from tourist information centres or can be downloaded from

[www.discoverloughneagh.com](http://www.discoverloughneagh.com). Jim Canning, Chairman, Lough Neagh Partnership said "Lough Neagh is really beginning to take off as a top site for water recreation – and the new canoe trail is another great step in the right direction."

## No more snakes!



If you have ever experienced a snake while towing a trailer full of kayaks, you should see the benefit of the LEAS stabiliser. The stabiliser works on the same principle as ESP (Electronic Stability Assistance) on a car, by applying controlled braking in critical situations. It is an electro-mechanical device, which detects the start of a snaking movement and immediately applies the brakes of the trailer.

Sudden hard braking, gusting winds and sharp steering, even at slow speed can cause snaking movements, which can result in jack-knifing or rolling.

Unlike other anti-snake devices, which work as constant friction dampers on every movement, the LEAS Stabiliser applies the trailer brakes only when lateral movement is detected. This is performed using the patented electronic movement sensor and motor assembly.

The stabiliser works using a large spring charged by a cam on an electric motor, when the snake is detected the motor turns the cam and the spring is released. This activates 20% of the vehicle's braking capability. Once the lateral movement of

the snake is no longer detected the motor turns the cam and the spring is recharged ready for the next release.

The stabiliser is very popular in Germany and comes recommended by the German consumer association, the German test institute and the German auto club.

The lateral movement sensor is positioned at the rear of the caravan/trailer, with the electric motor and high power spring on the A-frame at the front. Power for the system is taken directly from the towing vehicle engine battery, as the required amperage is too great to be taken through the tow hitch.

The LEAS Stabiliser is priced at £499 with a fitting charge of £100.

● BCU Members are eligible for a 5% discount off the kit which is a saving of £25.



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## Paddle Round The Pier Beach Festival

**Saturday 5th and Sunday 6th July**  
This year's festival will be double the size of 2007 in terms of space and events taking place.

Sponsored by the Custom Group, the event is hoping to raise more money than ever for its three chosen charities: the RNLI, the Chestnut Tree Hospice and SurfAid International.

Across the weekend, visitors will be able to watch and take part in a whole host of activities both in the water and on the land, centred around a massive 'paddle village' on Hove Lawns.

Saturday is 'Hardcore Day' and kicks off with the Oxbow Stand Up Paddle race, which will see competitors paddle their stand up boards from Worthing Pier to the West Pier. Other races on the day include the Pure Vacations Pier to Pier Race and the Perception Kayaks Pier to Pier to Pier race.

Sunday is 'Family Day', with a much more laid-back vibe to it and main events include the Paddle Something Unusual and the main 'Paddle Round The Pier'.

The paddle village includes a large shopping area, children's entertainments, the Chilled Turtle Ukulele Festival and the main music stage, which plays host to a number of bands and musicians throughout the weekend, including the Railing Stains, Los Albertos and Ukulele legends, the Rinky Dinks.

David Somerville from the organising team said: "Being a charity event we rely heavily on the kindness of our sponsors, local businesses and individual volunteers, so make sure you come down on the weekend and do your bit to help too by donating some money." [www.paddleroundthepier.com](http://www.paddleroundthepier.com)

# Scotland's first canoe trail: The Great Glen

**Work is underway on turning Scotland's premier canoe touring route into a user-friendly trail with appropriate services en route. This is the responsibility of a partnership led by British**

**Waterways, who control the Caledonian Canal, which together with three lochs, make up the route from Fort William to Inverness. The other partners are; the SCA, Forestry Commission, VisitScotland, Scottish Natural Heritage, Highland Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the Great Glen Ways Partnership, who will play a crucial part, as it includes private tourism operators.**

Before paddlers start to worry that this will detract from an already popular journey, perhaps a few words of comfort to allay fears. A survey of paddlers during summer 2007 showed that most valued the 'wild camping' experience of the trip, whilst others also wanted more information, especially on different types of accommodation (hot showers welcome in wet and cold weather!) and also different activities to extend a holiday, or give variety to children.

The first issue has been met – the SCA web site now includes a new and comprehensive guide, meeting with approval from paddlers and BW staff. It can be found by going to [www.canoescotland.com](http://www.canoescotland.com) and then

to 'Access and Environment' and scrolling down.

The partnership will take all views into account, so that we don't end up with any Disney-type theme park and notices all over the place. British Waterways have already appointed a consultant, who is currently carrying out a study into the trail details. One factor already emerging is that the current toilets and showers on the canal parts are near to

capacity in high summer and alternatives (not accessible from roads) are required. The Forestry Commission are also researching new and water-accessible camp sites.

We will keep you informed of progress. To view the new DVD on the Great Glen, go to [www.highland.gov.uk/leisureandtourism/what-to-see/longdistancepaths/greatglenways.htm](http://www.highland.gov.uk/leisureandtourism/what-to-see/longdistancepaths/greatglenways.htm). It takes a few minutes to upload, but it's worth it.

**EDDIE PALMER AND MIKE DALES, SCA**



## Wenonah Wilderness Solo

In the April issue of Canoe Focus we reported on the new release of the Wenonah Wilderness but featured the wrong illustration. With the correct image (left) we can report that this canoe can carry plenty of gear, encouraging exploration.

The Wilderness carries additional freeboard and bow height for a drier ride in rough waters, and marries the additional freeboard with the correct amount of tumblehome required for efficient paddling technique.

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 boat is available in Royalex and proven lightweight composite constructions.

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

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

## Gent Marathon



**The Marathon Committee provided the opportunity for 26 athletes and four staff to attend the Gent Blaarmeersen K1 marathon race on 22nd March.**

The weather forecast for the weekend was not good. Strong winds, low temperatures, rain and possibly snow were forecast. The starts went smoothly with several of our paddlers featuring well up the fields. There were one or two capsizes due to clashes of paddles and boats resulting in a very cold dip. Special mention must go to Mimi who gave up her race to assist one of her team mates who capsized. The organisers recognised this and gave Mimi a sporting award.

In the girl's race, Katie Williams took first place and third place went to Jenny Illidge. Whilst in the boys, the best placing was eighth for Peter Wilkes. The paddlers overall did well competing in the junior U18 category with most of them being U16s and some U14s.

The team deserve praise for their behaviour throughout the trip and their assistance in loading the trailer and keeping the buses tidy. Thanks to Mike Childerstone and Adrian Croucher for helping to load the trailer at Elmbridge. The team learnt from your lead!

Thanks James Smythe for arranging the trip and making all the travel and accommodation bookings, Dave Enoch for dealing with the trip administration, vehicles and trailer, to the Marathon Committee for providing the opportunity to sample racing on the continent and to my fellow staff members for their hard work throughout the weekend.

The results for the event can be viewed on the web at [www.kccq.be/](http://www.kccq.be/)  
**MELVIN SWALLOW**



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 Jo Walkworth  
 Ilfracombe

## Equality update

The BCU/Canoe England have updated their Equality Action Plan which is now available to view on the web site. The document is a developing plan to allow scope for new projects. The newly formed National Equality Advisory Group will assist Canoe England in reviewing and implementing the plan while thoughts and ideas are always welcome from our members.

### Equity Policy Template

Following the updated version of the BCU/Canoe England Equality Policy, clubs can now access a template to assist them in writing their own policy. The policy is available on the web site and gives guidance on the maximum wording to use within your policy. The policy can be edited to ensure it is relevant for each club and sections which are deemed not relevant to that club can also be deleted. For further guidance, completed club policies can be emailed to Canoe England ([equity@bcu.org.uk](mailto:equity@bcu.org.uk)).

Thank you to everyone who has been involved in the consultation for the BCU/Canoe England three-year Equality Plan and also to those who have helped us work towards the Equality Standard for sport. For a hard copy of any of the above documents, please email [equity@bcu.org.uk](mailto:equity@bcu.org.uk) or call 0845 3709530.

## North Tyne challenge



Over the 24-25th May Ged Hobbins and Bruce Anderson paddled 66 miles from Kielder to the mouth of the Tyne in a Canadian canoe. Bruce was

experienced in the art of canoeing but Ged was a relative novice, his only previous experience in the last 30 years had been on a pedalo in Crete. So it was certainly a tough challenge.

The pair were raising funds for the Saras Hope Foundation. To donate, visit: [www.sarashopefoundation.co.uk/sara\\_donate.html](http://www.sarashopefoundation.co.uk/sara_donate.html)

# Volunteer web site

Thanks to the newly formed Youth Action Network, the Canoe England volunteer web site now includes more information for clubs and volunteers. The group of 14 young people advised Canoe England of the type of information they would find useful, as volunteers resulting in new pages and more information.

Clubs and volunteers can now find new resources, including templates in the Good Practice Bank, news, information and details of opportunities available at events and clubs.

Your club or organisation can promote their opportunities for new or existing volunteers on the web site. Also, if you have any more ideas on what you would like to see or know, then please let the Volunteer Development Officer know:

[volunteers@bcu.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@bcu.org.uk)

### Role descriptions

Canoe England now has a set of templates available to clubs and volunteers which outline the role of various volunteer's positions in clubs. The set of role descriptions can be used to assist clubs in recruiting volunteers into positions and to help recognise what is involved in each role and where the duty ends – a helpful tool for both committees and volunteers to ensure individuals won't take on too much!

Copies of the role description templates are available from [volunteers@bcu.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@bcu.org.uk) and are also available on the web site [www.canoe-england.org.uk](http://www.canoe-england.org.uk), under volunteers (Good Practice Bank). More will be added throughout the coming months.

## Club Volunteer Coordinators

### What is a Club Volunteer Coordinator?

Club Volunteer Coordinators coordinate the recruitment, training and opportunities for volunteers within the club. They act as the main contact for all volunteers within the club and target the recruitment, development, retention and rewarding of volunteers.

### What is involved?

The main purpose of the role is to offer guidance to other club volunteers while identifying any training needs or support required. The Volunteer Coordinator should be aware of who is best to signpost individuals to, in order for them to develop their needs. Other responsibilities include; encouraging and promoting volunteer roles and opportunities, while ensuring all volunteers are rewarded and know they are appreciated.

### What are the benefits?

- Provides a point of contact to new and existing contacts.
- More volunteers can be attracted through recruitment campaigns led by Volunteer Coordinator.
- Volunteers will know what their roles and responsibilities are.
- Trained volunteers once needs are identified.
- Support from Canoe England.

### Is there any support available for our Volunteer Coordinator?

Canoe England would like to offer support and information to club Volunteer Coordinators. The Volunteer Development Officer will maintain regular contact and offer ongoing support to your Volunteer Coordinator through a range of resources, knowledge, advice and information. A Volunteers Coordinator pack will be available soon. If your club has a Volunteer Coordinator, let Canoe England know ([volunteers@bcu.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@bcu.org.uk)).



Calder Foods close-up

## Teams tackle toughest test

Teams from across the UK took part in one of England's toughest charity events, the Ford Ranger Great Lakeland Challenge. The event took place on 16th May and raised almost £80,000 for disabled and disadvantaged children and young people throughout the UK. The teams canoed the 10.5 mile length of England's longest lake, Lake Windermere, then cycled a 26-mile route over Wrynose and Hard Knott – England's steepest passes – before conquering England's highest peak, Scafell Pike, as part of an eight-mile trek from Wasdale Head to the Langdale Valley.

Completing the challenge in 7 hours and 53 minutes, the fastest team was the Movianto Motivators, whose members live in Bedford, Wigan and St. Helens. The winners of the cherished wooden spoon, awarded to the last team home, were three brothers from Edinburgh. Stirling and North Berwick – The Tartan Spoon 49ers – with a time of 11 hours and 49 minutes!

For the first time in the 12-year history of the event the main accolade was shared by two teams. The Challenge Bowl, which is awarded for the best combination of time and funds raised, was presented to Two Half Backs and a Prop from Tonbridge in Kent and Carlisle-based Calder Foods. The Fundraising Bowl was won by another family team, The Three Musketeers from Hertfordshire.

The Ford Ranger Great Lakeland Challenge is one of a series of Spoon Challenges, which also includes the Four Peaks and End 2 End cycle challenges. Great Lakeland Challenge teams were required to raise a minimum of £3,900.

To find out more about the Spoon Challenges visit [www.spoonchallenges.com](http://www.spoonchallenges.com) or contact the Spoon Challenges office on 01889 582889.

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# Students on the Spey



Seven students from the Foundation Degree in Adventure Sports at Reaseheath College and two members of staff boarded a bus and headed north to paddle the Spey from Loch Insh to the sea. This entailed four days on the water and a total of 97kms. Nev Holmes describes the experience.

Looking back to the Cairngorms

The first afternoon paddling the short distance from Loch Insh to Aviemore was spent improving and learning moving water skills in the sun in preparation for the week ahead. For a trip of this kind to work, of course, transport is needed at the end of the river. That evening saw one lucky member of staff (Nev) do the Aviemore to Spey Bay shuttle, returning in a taxi driven by a Canadian chap talking to a Welshman on his radio. A round trip of three hours.

Wednesday, and the boats were loaded with all the kit needed for the next two days with some students having to think carefully about where to put themselves in all this kit. The group headed downstream in good weather to paddle the flat piece of river, where the views of the receding Cairngorms were spectacular with some of the last remaining snow patches of the year still clearly visible. That afternoon the group arrived at the Boat of Balliefurth camp site. This has to be one of the best little canoeing camp sites in Scotland. It is only really used by paddlers, where you see them camping either by the river or in a field next to a fire. There is a toilet and a tap to keep you going, whilst the owners are extremely friendly and welcoming.

The following day was the big one: 40km of paddling into a head wind with a few Grade 2 rapids and many Grade 1s to contend with. The river was quite low during the trip so there were a few bumpy bits to negotiate along the way. This section of the

river was where the group started to meet quite a few fishermen, often accompanied by an expensive four wheel drive and a Gilly dressed in tweeds etc. Throughout the whole trip we did not meet one grumpy fisherman.

### The 'washing machine'

Later that day we encountered the infamous 'washing machine' rapid. This is essentially a chute of water running down gravel banks which creates a sizeable wave train. Needless to say for some, the desire to go tearing down the middle was too great to resist and all of the students' boats got swamped apart from the one that capsized. I think that all those involved will admit a bit of gunwhale grabbing on the way down, especially Matt and Volker who were in the capsized boat. Excitement was heightened within the group as we paddled onto to Craigallachie and our next camp, a distance that day of 40km. Due to a late start we did not arrive at Craigallachie until evening and discovered that the camp site was a grass area next to a car park situated a short distance from the river. We knew this to be the case as we checked with some locals who found us standing on the bridge thinking, "is this really it?"

The group set off at nine on the final day, ready for the push to the sea. Just before Boat O' Brig there are two short drops, one giving a bit of a wave train. This was the location of Matt and Volker's unfortunate second capsizes. It was also the location

of a very amused fisherman watching his second capsizes of the day; apparently another group had already been through that morning, with similar results for one of their canoes.

Finally we reached the sea and Spey Bay. Some of the group went out for a surf after dumping all of the kit from their boats and managed surprisingly well as most were still paddling tandem.



Tom strutting his solo stuff



Gaz and Biggun practicing their moves





Volker and Matt preparing to swim



The view from Craigellachie old bridge



"If only we can be brought to realise what we are capable of, we may never again settle for anything less."



Beige and Matt enjoying the sun



Gunwhale grabber Matt is made to paddle



Volker and Matt dry out

So why do it? Why take a group of students so far to paddle a river? There is of course the obvious, that the Spey is a classic trip and always well worth doing. That aside, students who are studying to enter the outdoor industry should be looking to more than just a simple experience. The Spey holds many of the fundamentals of Outdoor Education within its turns and rapids. There is the simple element of challenge. We all develop through being in challenging

situations and learning that we can overcome them through our own mental strength and determination. The rapids may not be big but a few days on a river in whatever the weather throws at you can seem daunting to some. Add some long days paddling loaded boats into a head wind and the challenges begin to become apparent. For Reaseheath degree students who eventually become leaders they need to be able to learn how to motivate and manage others, to make the leap from participant to leader. What better way to start learning some of these skills by paddling on flat water for kilometre after kilometre and then being confronted by seemingly endless rapids, no matter how small. All the time they have to work with the other person in their canoe and motivate not only themselves but also each other. One student commented that they had learned to strengthen their self-esteem by "going first and not just following the others down rapids."

those conditions. It gives the students experiences that will help them empathise with their own groups in the future.

There are some more functional aspects to learning on a trip such as the Spey. Multi-day trips require the development of expedition skills ranging from the seemingly simple, such as cooking for oneself to managing kit and staying dry. All skills that a leader needs to be quick and efficient in when working with a group, as one student put it, "I learned the true value of a black bag, to buy quick drying equipment and to buy more food than I think necessary."

Finally, and by this I am in no way suggesting that the above is an exhaustive list of what the students have learned, there are the canoeing skills that the group has learned along the way. All that remains at the end for the staff is to facilitate the review and draw out the point of the trip and help the students make it relevant to their course and future aspirations. It can be worth reminding ourselves of what Kurt Hahn founder of Outward Bound and Gordonstoun, amongst others, said "If only we can be brought to realise what we are capable of, we may never again settle for anything less." ●

**THE TEAM: MATT T, MATT W, GAZ, BEIGE, VOLKER, BIGGUN AND TOM.**  
**STAFF: NEV AND ELTON.**

**Communication and co-operation**

Paddling tandem introduces many aspects of communication and indeed co-operation. On a trip such as this a tandem team will go through a range of development experiences together, especially if they are also sharing a tent. These experiences can range from simply enjoying the countryside to the immediacy and increased stress levels presented by an awkward rapid. These experiences teach them some of what a group may feel and behave like in



# THE ROAR OF THE RIVER



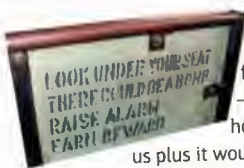
Nepalese Buddha statue



The India Nepal border

For my 41st birthday present my wife said I could go to Nepal, so I quickly arranged a trip for November with my brother-in-law Richard Knibb, before she changed her mind. Richard is not a paddler but is a well-seasoned traveller of foreign parts and has been to India before.

I thought it would be an ideal opportunity to raise funds for Cancer Research UK, so I hounded family, friends and work mates to put their hands in their pockets. With their help I managed to raise a total of £1,100.



We flew to Delhi in India, as it was half the price of flying direct to Kathmandu – this was a budget holiday, no fancy hotels for us plus it would give us a chance to see some of India on our way to Nepal. We landed in Delhi at 6am and made our way to the train station by bus with a notice asking you to tell the driver if you find a bomb. We then went on a wild goose chase all around Delhi trying to find the official tourist ticket office. Four hours later and very fed up we found it, upstairs in the train station where we first started.

**LESSON 1 DON'T TAKE ADVICE FROM TUC TUC 'MOTORISED RICKSHAW' DRIVERS.**

We travelled down to Agra to visit the Taj Mahal, which is a very beautiful building, one of the wonders of the world, so it was worth the hassles of getting there. We then made our way up to the Nepalese border on an overnight sleeper train for 16 hours to the town of Gorakhpur.

**LESSON 2 DON'T USE THE TOILETS ON THE TRAIN AS THEY'RE NOT NICE.**

We then had a mosquito biting, dust filled, blowing exhaust, bus ride from hell for three hours on a dirt track to the border town of Sonauli where we spent the night in a flea pit of a hotel. We crossed the border into Nepal early on a very misty morning and caught a local bus to Pokarha, Nepal's second biggest city. After a journey of 12 hours we arrived in the dark and very hungry. Luckily Lakeside, the tourist part of Pokarha, has lots of cheap hotels and restaurants, so it wasn't long before we were dining in style.

After five days of travelling we had one day in Pokarha to relax and to finalise arrangements with Lotus Wave Nepal for our three-day Kali Gandaki river raft trip. I looked at the kayak hire shops and found Ganesh kayak shop to be the best. A Frenchman who has lived out there for 30 years now owns it. He has a good knowledge of the rivers around Pokarha. I hired a Pyranha Ina Zone 230, a set of Werners, spray deck, buoyancy aid and a helmet for £10 a day, all in very good condition.

The next morning we went for breakfast at a café to meet the rest of the group. The group consisted of seven Brit's including Richard and myself, one Kiwi, one Nepalese plus four Nepalese river guides. We all squeezed into a minibus loaded up with two rafts, two kayaks plus equipment and food for three days. The scenery on the way to the get-in was outstanding, as we drove through small villages and over mountain passes. At arrival we unloaded the mini bus and pumped up and packed the rafts. As we did this, two guides got lunch ready and then we set off.



Food preparation

# NEPAL'S KALI GANDAKI

Since I was a kid I have wanted to visit Nepal and that's a very long time now. I've been paddling for about 12 years, so any visit would have to include paddling down some of the best white water in the world Clive Howell-Williams thought.



Clive and Chandra

## 'Big Brother'

I followed Chandra the safety kayaker, his brother Purna guided the group raft while Loku and Shalik steered the equipment raft. The first big rapids we came to were 'Little Brother' a Grade 3/4 rapid, then 'Big Brother' a Grade 4 rapid with a big wave train, with deep troughs blocking your view of the line until you rose to the top of the wave again. The waves led to a hole at the bottom of the rapid, which I had to roll up in twice, until it spat me out.

The Kali Gandaki is Nepal's holiest river and we saw a cremation next to the river's edge as we passed by. On the first day we covered 15km. In the evening we set up camp on the beach using the rafts propped up as shelters to sleep under. The raft guides then set about making the evening meal and very tasty the food was too. When the sun went down it became cold in the deep gorge next to the river so hats, socks and trousers

were needed inside your sleeping bags, it was November after all.

All I could hear at night when I tried to get to sleep "apart from snoring" was the roar of the river from the rapid just down stream. The next morning we had breakfast, packed up camp and set off for the rapid that kept me awake all night, aptly named 'wakey wakey' a Grade 3/4 rapid. From here on the rapids were mainly big long bouncy Grade 3 but with room to change your line and manoeuvre around stoppers and boulders. We travelled about 25km the second day, stopping for lunch halfway, then camping again that night. On the third day we travelled for 13km of which the last 5km were flat.

I did a bit of coaching when some of the rafters had a go in Chandra's kayak, a chance to practice my X rescues until we came to the dam. We packed everything away on the minibus and drove back to

Pokarha for five hours "some shuttle" where I had my first hot shower in nine days!

Richard and I spent another day in Pokarha to rest, then travelled by local bus for six hours to Kathmandu, a very large sprawling city. We visited the sights of Thamel getting lost in the maze of old streets. We also visited the monkey temple where, surprise there were lots of monkeys, it's a Buddhist temple, and the monks were in the prayer room chanting, banging a drum and blowing a big horn, it made a very eerie sound.

Many thanks to all who donated and to my wife Rachel for putting up with me going off paddling on rainy weekends all these years. To Mark Burch of Brookbank Canoes and Alan Pashley for many frustrating years teaching me to paddle. Also thanks to the guides from Lotus Wave for looking after us so well on the river. ●

**CLIVE HOWELL-WILLIAMS**

The Taj Mahal



# Fifty islands... One year to do them!



The topic 'what is an island' led to heated debates on several trips! Chambers dictionary defines 'island' as 'a mass of land (not a continent) surrounded with water' which didn't help much! I wanted a definitive list, so I decided to rely on the OS 1:50,000 maps.

Even then, I needed five categories of island:

- A: shown on the map and named 'island' or 'isle'
- B: shown on the map and named, but not including 'island' or 'isle'
- C: shown on the map but un-named
- D: shown on the map but an artificial 'island'
- E: not shown on the map but shown and named on the OS 1:25,000 or Admiralty chart.

There are numerous named 'rocks' or 'stones', but to qualify as B, C, or E they had to contain soil and vegetation. No matter how many bits the 'islands' are formed of, they only counted once! I decided to restrict myself to 'every island between Land's End and North Foreland' – a grand total of 66. So all I had to do now was paddle around them!

Seven of us have paddled together most weekends for the last four years – Mark and Sarah Kelly, Clare Howard, Mark Cook, Bill Beetham, Nigel Rodgers and myself. We all visited the local islands, but only the nutters went to the more distant ones! Rather than just dash to an island and 'tick the box', I wanted to have a reasonable trip of 20-30km, aiming to eventually cover the entire coastline of southern England.

## The start

We started on 8th January, with an attempt to go round the six biggest Islands in Poole Harbour (a good

place to start!). We failed because we found a cormorant and Herring Gull trapped together by fishing line and hooks on Stone Island. It took an hour to release them, including hailing a passing lifeboat and by the time we released them we were too cold to continue the trip. We completed the remaining islands in Poole and Christchurch Harbours during January, February and March.

On 4th April, Mark Kelly and I went round Hayling and Portsea Islands, taking in all the smaller islands in Chichester, Langstone and Portsmouth Harbours. It was a long trip (44km), bitterly cold and the tide prevented us from rounding Thorney and Pilsea Islands, so we returned in October.

On 6th May we went round the Isle of Portland. The 'Bill' can be very dangerous, but we picked the weather and tide carefully and had a smooth passage. Once around the Bill, we continued across Weymouth Bay to Ringstead, before returning to Portland Harbour.

At the end of May we went to the Stackpole Sea Kayak Festival and got round Skomer and Caldey where I saw my first puffins.

On 5th June I visited my daughter at Plymouth University. To avoid a completely wasted journey, I got an early start, launched from Mountbatten, went round Drake's Island and up the Hamoaze (taking in two small islands in the rivers to the west) to the Tamar Bridges, then turned and went out to the fort, the breakwater and the Great Mew Stone, for a round trip of 38 km. She let me take her out for dinner in the evening!

We had long talked about a trip around the Isle of Wight. Several PHCC club members had already done it and we took their comments on board. We wanted to go as a group and decided to take two days, camping overnight at Bembridge. The forecast for Tuesday, June 24th was just about perfect (light east wind, smooth sea). So at 20:00 hours I decided there was no reason not to go – except that no one else was free!

Arriving at Keyhaven at 04:00, and launching at 04:30, the sea was completely smooth and the ebb tide through Hurst Narrows at dawn was like a conveyor belt. I arrived at the Needles just as the tide turned and set out for St Catherine's Point. Low cloud pouring over the hilltop obscured most of the coast but the lighthouse was clearly visible. Arriving at Ventnor at about 0930, I pulled into the harbour and ate breakfast sitting in the boat. At that point, I decided to see if I could make the trip non-stop, so used the comfort bottle and carried on.

The long haul across Sandown Bay had the easterly wind on the beam and a light swell got up, but arriving at Bembridge Foreland felt good; it was all homewards from here! I stopped again off Nettles Point for lunch and another comfort break. The wind had died, the sea was calm and the current carried me another kilometre while I lunched!

Passing Ryde, I was still feeling good and decided to make the last leg as fast as possible. I covered the 18km from Ryde to Hurst Spit in 90 minutes, helped by a very strong tide and a light tail wind, arriving back at North Point in 10 hours 42 minutes. My previous longest trip had been 61km, so it seemed a

Poole Harbour Canoe Club (PHCC) celebrated its 50th birthday in 2006. To mark the anniversary, Dave Harlow decided to circumnavigate 50 islands in the year.

Kimmeridge in November 2006, before the Clavel Tower was moved from the cliff top

pity to finish a trip at only 95km. After another comfort break, I went back towards Lymington, to make a total trip of 100km in 12 hours! My wrists and elbows were so tired it was difficult to climb out of the boat. Many thanks to the gentleman who helped me lift the kayak onto the roof rack!

Soon afterwards the other six also got round in two days. It just demonstrates how difficult it is to get a group together on a day when the weather and tides work.

In July I joined PHCC's bi-annual trip to Brittany, and another 22 islands in the Gulf of Morbihan and the Isle de Glennan were in the bag. Following this Mark K and I got away for three days camping in Cornwall going from St Michael's Mount, around St Clement's Island and continued around Land's End. It was a long trip and the weather was forecast to deteriorate the next day, so it seemed a shame not to go round Longships before pulling in at Sennen Cove. On the 27th, we launched from Coverack and went round the Lizard to Mullion Cove. On the 28th Mark C, Sarah and Clare joined us and we went back to Land's End.

#### Kefalonia

August was the only month I didn't 'bag' a new Island, although I did visit Kefalonia with my long-suffering wife! On 6th September, Mark K and I went from Burgh Island to Great Mew Stone and back and did Salcombe to Burgh Island and back on the next day.

On 4th October I had a 165-mile drive to Looe, around St George's Island and went on to Polperro, Salcombe and back (36 km). A quick change, drive to

A Islands	Grid ref	map
St Clement's Isle	474262	203
Mullion Island	661176	203
Asparagus Island	684132	203
Gull Island	050518	204
St George's or Looe Island	257514	201
Sango Island	429537	201
Drake's Island	469528	201
Netton Island	554456	202
Ivy Island	577466	202
Battisborough Island	604467	202
Burgh Island	647439	202
Isle of Portland		194
Isle of Purbeck		195
Gigger's Island	949880	195
Long Island	987880	195
Round Island	988875	195
Pergins Island	000925	195
Green Island	006866	195
Furzey Island	011870	195
Brownsea Island	020880	195
Drove Island	015851	195
Isle of Wight	500860	196
Pewit Island	608039	196
Burrow Island	621008	196
Horsea Island	635045	196
Whale Island	637024	196
Portsea Island	660010	196
N. Binness Island	694046	197
Baker's Island	695036	197
S. Binness Island	698032	197
Long Island	701041	197
Hayling Island	720010	197
Fowley Island	743045	197
Thorney Island	760030	197
Pilsey Island	770005	197

B, C, D and E Islands	Grid ref	map
Longships (D)	319253	203
Tal-y-maen (Round Is) (E)	321250	203
The Peal (B)	341254	203
Armed Knight (B)	341247	203
Enys Dodnan (B)	344245	203
St Michael's Mount (B)	514300	203
Gull Rock (B)	684131	203
Gull Rock (B)	928369	204
Polmear Island (E)	039513	204
Hore Stone (B)	240510	201
St Germans River (C)	423572	201
Plymouth Breakwater (D)	472503	201
Fort (D)	472505	201
Great Mew Stone (B)	501474	201
Little Island (E)	649438	202
Salcombe Castle (E)	734381	202
Portland Breakwater E-N (D)	700768	194
Portland Breakwater S-E (D)	706755	194
Otter Island (C)	970917	195
Stone Island (C)	033871	195
Old Harry (C)	055825	195
River Avon (C)	162928	195
Blackberry Point (C)	175915	195
Gull Island (C)	435978	196
Spitsand Fort (D)	637972	196
Horse Sand Fort (D)	655949	196
No Man's Land Fort (D)	639938	196
St Helen's Fort (D)	648899	196
Langstone Harbour (C)	683034	196
Round Nap Island (E)		
Langstone Harbour (E)	703034	197
Beachy Head Lighthouse (D)	058495	199



Charlestown, paddle out to Gull Island and Polkerris (11km) and then drive home, made for a long day trip. We paid a return visit to Chichester Harbour to go round Thorney and Pilsey Islands.

November saw the last big trip attempted – the Isle of Purbeck. The OS map suggests this is the area east of Corfe Castle, but to be on the safe side we decided that it was best to start from Lulworth Cove, go past Kimmeridge and round St Aldhelm's Head, Anvil Point and Old Harry, enter Poole

Harbour and go up the River Frome to the tidal limit above the A351 road bridge (about 52km). The rising tide seemed the safest option; we would have the prevailing south westerly wind behind us on the open sea; we would do the open sea while we were fresh; the races were less pronounced on the flood and we would finish in the sheltered water of the harbour when we were tired.

#### Poor weather

The weather was never good enough for the attempt, so starting from the PHCC club hut at Lake Pier on 21st October, I went up the Frome to the railway bridge, turned and went all the way down to the harbour entrance before returning to Lake Pier to complete the north side of the isle (40km). On the 4th November, Neil Tigwell and I set out from Evening Hill (inside Poole Harbour) to Lulworth Cove. It was a beautiful autumn day and at one point we stopped paddling off Kimmeridge to experience profound silence for several minutes. The sea was completely calm with no hull or paddle noise at all. The silence was eventually broken by the bleating of a sheep, a couple of miles away.

On 6th November, Mark, Mark, Sarah and I went to Portsmouth to go round the four Palmerston Forts. There was only 200m visibility in the fog and it was too dangerous to risk crossing the 2km channel from Horse Sand Fort to No Man's Land Fort with foghorns sounding all around us. It was the only trip of the year to be curtailed due to bad weather.

At this point there were only two islands left on my list and I became very busy at work and it seemed I might not be able to reach them. Then we had a settled spell of high pressure and calm seas, and on 17th December I returned to Portsmouth and No Man's Land Fort – only one to go!

#### The end

On 20th December Mark C and I went to the final island: we drove 175 miles to Pendower Beach, went round Gull Rock and surfed the 10km to Zone Point, on to St Mawes and back to Pendower Beach as the sun set. We had done it! We then drove home, and went out to my wife's end of term party – it was the day before the shortest day, but it felt like the longest!

It was quite a year! I visited all 66 islands on the south coast of England, plus 28 in Wales and France. The most-circumnavigated island was Brownsea, in Poole Harbour; 25 times in the year! Altogether, with repeat visits, the score was about 180. We visited parts of the coast we might otherwise have overlooked and used parts of the almanac we had not previously studied.

It's been a great boost to our confidence to plan trips a long way from home and get the tidal streams and weather forecast right. It's nice to take a break during a trip, but it's also good to know that if it's too rough to land, we can always complete a long trip without needing to get out of the boat. The main lesson is – never miss the opportunity for a trip – you never know when the conditions will be right again! ●

Reconnaissance trip to the Needles in December 2005. (left to right: Nigel, Sarah, Andy, Dave, Mark K, Mark C.)



## GUEST TESTERS

### Dave Jaggs

(Ex world number two junior and kayak coach/England surf squad member)

**Height:** 6ft 2; **weight:** 85kg

### Ed Long

(Surf kayak coach/England surf squad member)

**Height:** 5ft 10; **weight:** 77kg

### Alex Read

(England surf squad member)

**Height:** 5ft 8; **weight:** 80kg

### Steve Bowens

(Fourth World Cup 2006, also a surf kayak coach)

**Height:** 5ft 11; **weight:** 76 kg

Dave, Ed and Alex are all from Marjon University surf kayak and part of the England surf kayak squad competing at the world surf kayak championships.

Incidentally Ed, Dave and Alex had skived off lessons from university to bum around Spain surfing, so if any of their lecturers are reading this don't accept any excuses about not having enough time to do their course work!

## Test conditions

**Location:** Bakio Beach, N. Spain

**Surf size:** Head high/3ft

**Surf type:** Steep and fast, onshore windy.

**Period:** Short

The Valley and Mega were also surfed by our testers on the legendary Mundaka wave, which is a steep, committed down the line barreling left.

## Limitations

The boats tested were those British designs available at the world championships in Mundaka (Spain). The Valley and the Mega were neither the lightest nor the stiffest in their range and we did not spend time specifically outfitting each boat for our paddlers. We also did not test the boats with the fins in different positions which can significantly change the characteristics of each boat, however it was felt that all these variables would make the test too complicated for what we wanted – which was to make it as user friendly and simple to follow as possible.

# Best of British

We have conducted these reviews to give the general surf kayak fraternity an idea of what is available within a specific range of boats of similar size but from different manufacturers. The comparison of the kayaks was carried out by a group of independent paddlers.

The sport of surf kayaking is changing, there has been an increase in emphasis on air with but very few surfers regularly managing to get their boat airborne when they want to. With improvements in design and lighter and stiffer boats being available, air has become more easily attainable and as such is becoming much more common place in the surf.



## Valley Rush

**Technical advisor: Sean Morley**



### Comfort 4/5

Ski like position, Alex (shortest tester) found this boat to be a bit big for his frame, easy for access and exit. A block of foam for the backrest comes with selection of foam for custom fitting. There were mixed views on this as some liked it and some preferred an adjustable belt fitting.

### Style 4/5

Very dependent on the colour. Some colours did make the boat look a little old fashioned, however, other colours looked really good. Valley produces boats in both standard colour scheme and in retro style glitter, as you desire.

### Down the line speed 5/5

Held a very high line on the wave giving confidence to make the sections. There was a lot of debate over which was fastest down the line between the Rush and the Fusion and it was decided that the Rush was marginally ahead.

### Carving 4/5

Holds speed and accelerates through the turn, lots of drive off the fins, Ed mentioned that there is a danger of getting caught out by flying off the back of the wave until you get used to its personality.

### Slashing 3/5

This is possible but needs to be encouraged with a lot of pre-rotation. With any boat, design speed will come at the sacrifice of manoeuvrability, though this does not mean that a fast boat will not be manoeuvrable but it will need specific techniques to be able to throw it around. The Rush will carve hard and produce lots of spray but it will not be as easy to throw around in the pocket as the Reflex 07.

### RRP

**£1195** – Full kevlar/carbon boat with a vacuum bagged foam-sandwich hull for competition levels of rigidity.

**£1395** – Full team-specification construction, full epoxy, full kevlar/carbon, vacuum bagged foam sandwich deck and hull.



## DB Fusion 77

Technical advisor: Nathan Eades



### Comfort 5/5

By far the most comfortable boat prior to customised fitting, all the testers thought that they could spend many hours at a time in the Fusion. The central pillar of foam is pre-cut to allow more room for feet and a locked in feeling to allow positive feel and access and exit. The Fusion we tested had a moulded seat, which made it a little more difficult to customise a paddling position but it is available with a

foam seat allowing a greater degree of customisation.

### Style 3/5

The graphics on the latest designs help to make the boat look streamlined. Although this boat was considered to be the least aesthetically pleasing, Ed reckoned that his good looks meant that any boat looked good on his shoulder. Joking apart, Dave Brown has really helped the original look with the addition of funky lines and colours.

### Down the line speed 4.5/5

There was thought to be little difference between the Rush and the Fusion. The Fusion has excellent directional stability giving it a 'point and go' feel. The large edges allow this boat to be pumped up to speed and fly down the line. This boat also has the largest hull surface area, this combined with its speed makes it really good for floaters and moves above the wave.

### Carving 5/5

Positive acceleration out of the turn, very big rails creating a great deal of grip. This boat gives you feeling of pulling lots of G's when turning on a larger wave.

### Slashing 2.5/5

This Fusion is designed for carving and speed. As such it is a little uncomfortable in the set-up we were using to be slashed around. It may be that by moving the fins forward and perhaps using a smaller central fin that the characteristics would change, but this would be at the cost of its down the line speed.

### RRP

£800 – for glass fibre and kevlar carbon.

£1,000 – for epoxy, kevlar carbon construction.

£1,300 – for epoxy, vacuum bagged, Kevlar carbon with foam core and a set of carbon fins.

## Mega Reflex 07

Technical advisor: Darren Bason



### Comfort 2/5

The Reflex needs more time than the others to personalise for comfort. The central foam pillar is solid and thus leaves little room for your feet. We all found this boat to be the least comfortable to sit in for long periods of time but with a personal fitting could be made to be more comfortable. It is also worth remembering that this boat is the lowest volume and as such the benefits of

having a low volume boat will make the comfort task much harder for the manufacturer.

### Style 5/5

This was voted as the sexiest of surf kayaks on the beach by testers. Boat comes in standard colours or in retro glitter as you wish.

### Down the line speed 3.5/5

The Reflex is built to turn, not go in a straight line. This does not mean that the boat is slow and all testers considered it to be considerably faster than older models of surf boat of a similar size. A good example of this is when Ed had his Reflex and Neutron (bigger, faster boats) sitting next to each other on the beach prior to the world finals in surf which was peaking at double overhead. He picked up the Neutron to surf in these conditions.

### Carving 3.5/5

The Reflex wants to be slashed from side to side rather than carved, this style comes from Darren Bason's influence on the design of the boat. The boat will also carve well but does not hold the speed through a drawn out turn to the same extent as the others.

### Slashing 5/5

The Reflex really wants to be thrown from side to side, spitting spray at your competitors.

### RRP

Various constructions from £895.

## VERDICT

Overall all the boats tested were very impressive in their performance. It was felt that each design was very much influenced by the style of paddling personified by the technical adviser.

Darren Bason is a very busy surfer, always throwing the boat around on the wave and using his large amount of strength to ensure lots of speed on the face of the wave when he wants to make the section.

Nathan Eade's style tends to be fast and hard carving often trying to get the boat in the air and Sean Morley who comes primarily from a ski background tends to have a fast down the line style with hard carving turns throwing spray high in the air.

As to which boat is best, there is no answer. If you want a boat to go fast and carve hard taking it to the air, there is very little between the DB and Valley. However, if you want to slash and tear the wave apart then the Mega is the one for you. You might like to consider the type of break you normally surf on and what you will be using the boat for. The days of competition surf kayakers having one boat for all contests is coming to an end!

We all really enjoyed the testing and found it most informative to try out different boats. My advice if you are thinking of getting a new surf kayak is to try out as many different types as possible (ensure you do this on a typical UK beach as all three boats tested were destroyed by either taking a lip drop into the sand on a heavy dumping beach or colliding with a Bask local committed on the legendary Mundaka wave!).

In short if you want to go fast and get air then the Valley or DB are the one for you, if you want to throw your boat around in tight turns then the Mega is hard to beat.

Thanks to the manufacturers who put their kayaks forward and who travel all over the country to provide demo boats for people to try at surf competitions and demo weekends.

STEVE BOWENS



# Brighton surf babes hit Bude!



At Martlet Kayak Club we've built up a strong surfing tradition over the past few years, with several trips down to the West Country every year, lots of club and personal surf boats and an eagerness for paddlers to hit the waves whenever they can. Until now, there have been very few ladies involved in the discipline, with many often watching from the sidelines, or just playing in the smaller front waves. We ladies felt a bit left out!

I first found out about the BCU Women's Development Days when I was in my usual position as spectator during a club 3 Star and 4 Star trip to Bude last October. I'm not the most confident paddler and as Brighton does not have the best surfing conditions for beginners, I always thought I'd never be able to surf as all the courses were for 3 Star paddlers upwards. Simon Hammond cheerfully corrected me – this development day was for women of all abilities and I was really pleased to find a course that covered from those at beginner to world standard!

I took a deep breath and emailed around my fellow female paddlers and was very pleased with the response. The development day has proved to be a perfect platform – giving us the opportunity to try out a new discipline, or to improve our skills and techniques, without feeling foolish in front of all our professional male surfers!

We set about preparing ourselves for the big day as much as we could. Rolling practice isn't fun in the sea in January, so we organised some pool sessions for rolling and support stroke practice. One of the club surfers also hosted a Q&A session one evening, for all those silly questions we'd always wanted to ask but never had the courage.

The big weekend arrived, not the best weather, but pretty much perfect surfing conditions for training. We hit Summerleaze on Saturday – a nice, sheltered beach with ideal waves for us to practice. I quickly learned that waves don't have to be very big to be great fun!

The big day was Sunday. As a group, we had a wide range of paddling experience – from complete beginner, to an experienced river and sea coach – and so we were all looking for different things from the day. Some of us wanted an introduction to surfing and enjoying the waves, whilst others were already accomplished surfers looking to improve their techniques and move onto bigger waves.

### We split into three groups depending on previous surfing experience:

Chris Hammond took on the beginners. We began by working on low brace support side on to a wave and bongo sliding into the beach. Never moving very far out into the water and working in pairs, we all very quickly grew brave enough to try out all he suggested. We then progressed onto catching a few waves and how to stay straight whilst riding them in. The session was a fantastic confidence builder and gave us good foundation blocks to work on. We swallowed our fears, worked together, and revelled in each other's success and in being in such an exhilarating environment.

Ed Long took the intermediate group. They had all had some surf experience and were competent and comfortable in a kayak, but needed some hints and tips to really get the most out of riding the waves. They worked on how to best catch waves and getting in some top and bottom turns whilst riding them. Valley boats had also brought some demo boats down for us all to try in the afternoon and Ed's group took full advantage of the chance to try something new.

Simon Hammond took the advanced group out into some

### Instructors:

Simon Hammond  
Ed Long  
Chris Hammond

### Attendees:

Debbie Spinks  
Paula Sibley  
Nikki Jane  
Talia Martin  
Martina Besping  
Nathalie Calonnec  
Lydia Bush  
Petra Short  
Caroline Woodward  
Lily Leatham  
Jo Lyons  
Louise Batchelor  
Catherine Sculthorpe

bigger surf and worked them hard – looking at more advanced techniques in surfing, for catching the waves and for ruddering and turning. He gave some really good individual feedback, suggesting ways to move forward, or overcome individual problems.

Overall, it was an excellent day, which everyone enjoyed immensely. We're all now thoroughly hooked on surfing and happy to mix in with the big boys. It's also given us all a lot more confidence to progress and be braver in other areas of the sport. The huge smiles on everyone's faces at the end of the session told me that we'd all got a huge amount from the day, with lots to take away and practice. Who knows, I might even work on my 3 Star!

Our thanks also go to the BCU for the subsidy, which allowed many people to try surfing who probably wouldn't have done so otherwise. Thanks to Simon Hammond – as ever an excellent and encouraging coach. I would recommend it to any lady who fancies a bit of surf but hasn't had the courage or access to teaching. I'd also wholeheartedly recommend the day as a progression tool for anyone who already does surf, but wants to try and improve their technique and get ahead out into the bigger waves. ●

**DEBBIE SPINKS**





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# Coaching

## Rapid Education – Key concepts in WW kayaking

As I said last issue, being an effective white water kayaker is all about understanding and reflection. Last issue, we looked at developing an understanding of what we actually do and how to analyse and reflect on our actions. This issue, we will look at understanding the river itself.

### Using the force...

Ask yourself this question: What is stronger: the river or your arm muscles? I think we all agree on this one. The river is way stronger than the individual. It's like 'the force' in Star Wars. The Jedi Knights use the force to gain their power. As white water kayakers, we need to follow their example and use the force of the river. Beware – fighting the force leads to the dark (and wet) side...

So how can we use the force of the river? Mainly, as kayakers, we interact with the force to move us towards our chosen destination on the river. In order to do this effectively, we must be able to see where the force is heading. Firstly though, we need to appreciate a few rules about the force of the river:

- 1: The steeper a river, the faster the river will flow and the more powerful the force will be.
- 2: If the river flows through a constriction, the faster the flow and the more powerful the force.
- 3: When a river bends, the flow heads to the outside of the bend, hence the force will be stronger there.
- 4: Perhaps most important of all – the river is a 3D environment. What happens on the surface is caused by the shape of the river bed. Have a look at the 'Hydrotopography' chapter in 'Kayak' by William Nealy – it explains it really well.

These rules are pretty much constant worldwide. Now, how do we work out where the flow is heading? Try this exercise...

Go to a flat but moving stretch of river. Stand on the bank and draw an imaginary line from one bank to the

other. I often use my paddle to indicate the line. Now, imagine a giant clock face on the surface of the river, 12 o'clock being upstream. What time is the water flowing **towards** along the line? Is it all flowing towards the same time or does it vary along the line?

Now try this on some slightly more interesting bits of water. Think what time the water is flowing towards. It's important to develop the habit of looking at where different parts of the river are flowing towards. The main mistake many kayakers make is to assume that the river is one big chunk of water flowing downstream. This is generally the case but to be truly effective, we need to be more precise. Sometimes the river flows down and across, at a variety of angles.

The main idea of looking at the river to see where different parts of the flow are heading towards can be complemented by understanding certain features that appear regularly.

### Upstream and downstream 'v's

These are dead useful to white water kayakers, serving as indicators of where and where not to go. A downstream v is formed when the water is forced through a constriction. The water makes a dark v shape, pointing downstream. This indicates the deep water flowing down the river. An upstream v, however, is formed by a rock just below the surface. The

water makes a white frothy v pointing upstream. Have a look at photo 1.

### Standing waves

These are formed by a layer of fast moving water flowing over a layer of slow moving or still water, or an obstruction. Have a look at photo 2.

Standing waves can be immensely useful to white water boaters. If they are at an angle to the flow, we can use them to push us towards their downstream end. Handy if we need to cross the river, as we let the flow do all the work. Have a look at photo 3.

### Stoppers

A stopper is formed when water suddenly falls. When the water hits the river bed, not all of it flows downstream. The water resurfaces and flows upstream, towards the base of the drop. There are a million and one stoppers, each with its own character. Some are OK, some are incredibly dangerous.

Stoppers tend to fall into two broad types – 'surface' and 'deep'. Surface stoppers are really frothy, noisy and white. This is because the flow is recirculating near the surface, mixing forcibly with air. Have a look at the example in photo 4.

Alternatively, we have deep stoppers. Deep stoppers appear calm and quiet. This is because all the recirculation is happening below the surface. Have a look at photo 5:

So how do we tell a nice hole from one that will give you a shoeing? There are a few things to consider. In a surface hole, loads of water is flowing under the recirculation. Hence, if you swim, you tend to go deep and reappear downstream. In a deep hole, no water is flowing under the recirculation. Thus, if you swim, you



Using the force

Photo 1: Upstream and downstream v



Photo 2: Standing wave



Photo 3: Crossing using wave





Photo 4: Surface stopper

are unlikely to get washed out that easily. Bad news!

The length of the recirculating flow, or tow back, will determine how easy it is to get through the stopper. The longer the tow back, the harder it is to get through.

The steeper the ramp of water flowing into the stopper, the more of a drubbing it will give you. Are the ends open, so you can paddle out of them, or blocked by an obstruction?

Remember – if a stopper is at an angle to the flow, most of the water will exit it at the downstream end.

#### Cushion waves

When water hits an obstruction, like a rock, it rebounds off of it, forming a cushion wave. Have a look at photo 6.

Boaters can use this water to push themselves away from obstacles or they can add their power to that of the cushion and ride it like a 'wall of death' motor cyclist to get a dynamic direction change with minimal effort. This is known as 'flare'. More on those later...

#### Drops

The river is 3D, remember? That means we are going to be faced with drops, or aspect changes, if you will. Drops as in photo 7, come in many forms but we'll have a look at how to tackle them later on...



Good stopper or bad stopper?



Photo 5: Deep recirculating stopper

"There are a million and one stoppers, each with its' own character. Some are OK, some are incredibly dangerous"

#### To summarise:

As boaters, we must be able to understand the river and use its' power to our advantage. If we try to fight the river all the time, we will lose. Using the river equates to interacting with selected bits of the flow to move us to where we want to be. In order to do that, we need to be able to work out where the river is flowing and spot certain recurring features.

OK, next time, we'll be looking at balance. Take care folks...●



Photo 7: Dave running a drop

Tom Parker –  
Coaching and Guiding



Photo 6: Flaring a cushion wave

# DW2008 — a chilling 60t

By Peter Hutchison

Nature played a strong hand in the 2008 Devizes to Westminster International Canoe Marathon. With the earliest Easter for 247 years, wintry showers, a bitter northerly wind and sub-zero temperatures at night with hounded competitors. Not since 1913 was Easter Sunday on the 23rd March and you'd have to wait until 2160 for it to be as early again. It wasn't until 1948 that the spectacular challenge of DW was created. Sixty years on, it's become a tradition of the canoe sport calendar — open to all, easy for none.



*"This year's race put the edge back into the competition. Over half of the seniors retired from the non-stop race,"* says DW organising team chairman Paul Ralph, reflecting on the tough conditions facing competitors. *"But you've got to hand it to the youngsters. 77 of the 84 entrants finished the course in what were arguably worse conditions than the seniors,"* added Ralph.

The conditions were the talking point of DW2008. In the week leading up to Easter, heavy rains across south England lifted water levels. DW Organisers put the Senior Doubles race onto an Easter Sunday one-tide afternoon finish to make sure paddlers were on the higher than usual Thames in daylight. As river levels bopped up and down, a cold front from the north interrupted the mild weather bringing northerly winds of 25mph and freezing temperatures. Met Office figures put overnight temperatures at a steady  $-2^{\circ}\text{C}$ , with daytime figures between  $6-9^{\circ}\text{C}$ . *"Add the wind chill and it's going to be much colder than that,"* said the man from the Met. More than ever, 564 paddlers in 301 boats were battling against the conditions as much as the course and their ability.

### Try, try and try again

Ollie Harding and Richard Hendron took first place in the Senior Doubles, completing the 125-mile course in 17hrs, 32mins and 30secs, beating Stuart West and Dave Pedlar into second place by just 45 seconds. For Harding it was unfinished business. A senior second place in 1977 and 79 and a fourth in 2002 followed a first in the juniors in 1974. This was Harding's long awaited first place. For a man who has waited 31 years for the top spot, Harding is low key. *"It's a pastiche of events, you try and forget most of it,"* he says, recalling leaving Devizes at 2:34 in the morning and feeling ice on the shaft of his paddle at the first portage three hours later. *"I remember hearing someone at Cookham (74 miles) say we were going to miss the tide. We made the gap up from there,"* he says. The figures stack up. Harding and Hendron completed the first 54 miles in 8hrs 29mins, covering the remaining 71 miles in 9hrs and 3mins.

Few would begrudge Harding his place in the history books. In 1977 he set a new course record, which stood for just 12 hours as the tactic of a daytime run was



Megan Middleton and Brian Greenaway. Courtesy of Brian Greenaway

introduced for Greenaway and Fowler to come in seven minutes faster. Thirty years on Harding is still *"really chuffed"* to win DW and somewhat surprised at its popularity, admitting people get addicted to the emotion of the event. Harding may not show the signs of a serial DWer, but Richard Hendron, Harding's doubles partner,

### 60th DW 60 years old 40 years of involvement

Di Edwards has completed the race in all classes so far, Ladies K1, Veteran/Junior and Senior K2 twice with her husband Roger. After Roger's success in C2 in, she felt an attempt in a C2 would be a suitable finale for her. And so they booked their daughters and niece with various friends to support them.

They caught the second tide on Sunday and left about 14.30, experiencing the canal and tunnel in the dark, with the Thames by daylight and completed the marathon in a time of 29hrs, 18mins. Di said *"Why is this such an emotional moment? I believe it's because this event is such a unique experience for every member of every team that takes part. The competitiveness and the comradeship within and between each team is something which is difficult to explain to non-paddlers but it is something we should cherish and take out into a wider world. Long may it continue."*



# h celebration



- RESULTS**  
**Senior Doubles**  
 1. Ollie Harding (Longridge CC) & Richard Hendron (Richmond CC) 17:32:30  
 2. Dave Pedlar & Stuart West (Worcester CC) 17:33:15  
 3. John Edyvean (Fowey River CC) & Tristram Turner (Bristol CC) 17:37:26



Fred Reif and Tim Muller racing and celebrating at the finish. Photos courtesy of Fred Reif.

The British white water rafting team take on DW. Picture courtesy of Adam Norfolk and team 412.

could be just such a case competing eight times in the last 11 years, winning the senior race twice.

Conditions for the Senior Doubles were appalling. Leaving after sunset, most crews were wearing three or four sets of thermals, a cag and headgear. Lock sides were frozen and slippery, hats dripped icicles and boats were coated with slabs of ice. The warmth inside compensated the loss of the light at the end of the Bruce Tunnel. The only plus was the light from a full moon on a clear night. Thankfully the blistering wind of the daytime had stopped for the night.

Four-day racers weren't so lucky. Fred Reif in the winning Junior Doubles boat with Tim Muller, both from Cokethorpe School, recalls the first day was pretty cold. On the second day snow and hail were compounded by a strong head wind. The pain of the second day pushed the pair beyond their 4½-hour training limit. *"It was pretty tough with hail going in our eyes,"* recalls Reif. Veteran DW paddler Brian Greenaway puts a longer perspective on this year's race. *"It's probably the worst conditions I've paddled in for 40 years,"* says Greenaway who's completed the race seven times as a senior and this year competed in the Vet/Junior race with Megan Middleton. *"Henley Bridge was horrendous,"* said Greenaway, *"with the northerly wind and the strong flow on the river there was a two-foot standing wave at Henley Bridge"* Most paddlers portaged the Henley Straight rather than battle the wind and river. Fred and Brian agree it was tough getting up for the 3am start for the fourth day.

## Single success

Richard Golder bought the appliance of science to his Senior Singles success. After last year's fourth position, he went through last year's performance with a sports scientist and developed a training plan and schedule to *"correct the mistakes from the previous year."* The analysis looked at weaknesses and set out a structured paddling programme. While the training looked at covering longer distances quicker, gym work and running, Golder is very clear about the vital contribution of a superb support crew. *"It's one person and one boat, but very much a team on the day,"* he says.

## Happy 60th Anniversary DW

Being the 60th anniversary, there had to be an element of fun to the race. Paddlers rose to the fundraising challenge, collecting an incredible £216,000 for chosen causes. Devizes brewery Wadworth joined the party, brewing commemorative beer DW60 to raise a toast to all paddlers who have taken on the challenge of the 125-mile course over the last 60 years. They added two paddlers of their own as well, with Wadworth employees Glyn Merritt and Dave Walker stepping up to the challenge, only to retire in the most difficult of conditions.

DW2008 also saw the first entry of a raft. The British White Water Raft Racing team took part in a six-person inflatable, completing the course in 31:53:10. *"It was great of the Organisers to let us take part,"* said team organiser Andy Norfolk. *"At the time it didn't seem that difficult,"* he says pausing to add, *"but looking back... It took a couple of days to get over it and probably scared some of the team for life."*

- Senior Singles**  
 1. Richard Golder (Nottingham CC) 15:57:06  
 2. Paul Wells (Richmond CC) 16:08:35  
 3. Paul Burgoyne (Hereford CC) 16:38:52

- Junior Doubles**  
 1. Fred Reif & Tim Muller (Cokethorpe School) 16:38:59  
 2. Nick Greensted & Jack Newton (Kelly College) 17:38:30  
 3. Robert Clark & Edward Searle (Canford School) 18:13:48

- Endeavour**  
 1. Sarah Hannon & Paul Yates (Wey KC) 17:36:23  
 2. Allister Sheffield & Pete Thomas (Dauntsey's School CC) 17:52:46  
 3. Billy Butler & Thom Simmons (Royal Hospital School) 18:35:59

- Veteran Junior Doubles**  
 1. Richard Kent & Tom Diaper (Southampton CC) 17:52:12  
 2. Nick Nelson-Pearcey & Freddie Lazell (Marlborough College) 18:54:17  
 3. Tolly Robinson & Ray Helmer (Penzance CC) 19:12:09

DW2009 takes place from 10-13th April 2009. For more information about the race or volunteering visit [www.dwrace.org.uk](http://www.dwrace.org.uk)

For all the fun, any paddle sport event can only run with volunteers and DW has hundreds of them. *"It's great fun,"* says Yvonne Riley, *"yes it's hard work, but we have a real laugh at the same time."*

*"It was an incredible event this year,"* says Ralph, pleased that the paddlers rose to the challenge of the conditions. *"The volunteers are essential for the running of DW,"* says Paul Ralph, adding *"I can't thank them enough".*

## Coming back for more

So what of that addictive emotion of DW that Harding talked of? Last year's junior winners were adamant they wouldn't do the senior race. Timothy and Philip Pearse not only did it, but also came fourth. Next year? *"Too early to say,"* said Timothy. Golder wouldn't rule out competing in the Senior Doubles next year. Reif thinks he and Muller will be there again. Raft-man Norfolk couldn't deny being tempted to tackle the course in a DW, having spent much of the winter training in a K2 to keep fit. And a DW Easter without Greenaway, Harding or one of the Hendrons somewhere along the course is unthinkable.

And what about you? Easter's much later next year, so the conditions should be better. Go on... you know you want to. It's never too early to start training. ●

**PETER HUTCHINSON**



Ollie Harding and Richard Hendron on their way to victory. Credit: Neil Thomas



# Spirit of Adventure

**Spirit Dancer ocean canoe sets off on 1st May 2008 on a journey of friendship and adventure.**



A fantastic paddling adventure has begun and you have the opportunity to join it. The journey's aim is to promote the spirit of friendship between Canada and Britain and there are opportunities for you to get involved.

The Spirit Dancer left Putney on 1st May 2008 and paddled past the historic and well known sites of London which are so special when viewed from the magnificent River Thames. Prior to departure the canoe received a traditional Canadian blessing which included a good luck song.

### Mission Statement for the journey...

*"To bring together, inspire and captivate youth from Canada and the British Isles for a journey of a lifetime in the Spirit Dancer canoe.*

*To provide the opportunity for youth to learn about team work, life skills, environmental research, history and culture while participating in an innovative challenge.*

*To complete over two summer seasons a circumnavigation of the British Isles covering over 4000km of coastline in a 42 foot Montreal Canadian canoe."*

Both the canoe and the spraydeck have been covered in traditional Canadian artwork. The decorative painting on the canoe is by Roberta Lindsay and aims to replicate the style of an original birch bark canoe. Artist Mairi Budreau painted the motif on the bow and stern of the canoe.

The two main artists for the spray deck are Una-Ann who is a Tahltan artist, from northern British Columbia and Xwa-lack-tun, born and raised in Squamish. All of the paintings on the canoe have a significant meaning.

### Background to the artwork

*"Teachings from our elders have been passed down from generation to generation. Our elders tell us that we have been here since time immemorial. They tell us that many of our resources were at one time our ancestors. Our Ancestors carry us along our traditional highways. With respect we raise our hands to our Ancestors. We thank them for what they have given us, knowledge, wisdom, and spirituality."*

### Red Cedar paddles

Stanley Park Wood, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada is well known for its vast array of trees. It was also home for its Aboriginal community from long ago. A huge storm passed through the wood on

December 15th 2006 and transformed its shape for many years to come.

The trees which fell included many which were several hundred of years old and some of this wood has been very kindly donated by Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation to the 'Spirit Dancer' to giveaway as gifts around the UK coastline. Paul Owen received one of these paddles on behalf of the BCU on the launch of the Spirit Dancer.

Chris Cooper, leader and inspiration for the journey, believes in the value of paddlesports to develop the youth of today and believes it is extremely beneficial for all. He wants to promote canoeing and to communicate how it can assist with personal and social development alongside team work.

### How can I get involved?

Chris Cooper is very keen for people to join him on by paddling on this journey, either in Spirit Dancer or paddle alongside the Spirit Dancer, thus guiding them in to shore. Chris would be very happy to see participants and would give you a very warm welcome. You can contact Chris via the Spirit Dancer web site.

### The British Isles canoe journey

This Spirit of Adventure will have 15 different sections or 'legs'. Most of the legs are two weeks in duration, except two which are one month long. The legs may need adjusting based on weather and sea state conditions. Paddlers will need to understand that there will be changes and sometimes delays based on weather and sea conditions.

Visit the web site for more information:

[www.spiritdancercanoejourneys.ca/index.html](http://www.spiritdancercanoejourneys.ca/index.html)

## Mileages and legs

Distances are in nautical miles and not exact

- Leg 1:** London to Portsmouth 200 NM  
May 01 to May 14 2008
- Leg 2:** Portsmouth to Penzance 250 NM  
May 17 to May 31 2008
- Leg 3:** Penzance to Bristol 250 NM  
June 15 to July 1 2008
- Leg 4:** Bristol to Fishguard 175 NM  
July 8 to July 22 2008
- Leg 5:** Fishguard to Holyhead 160 NM  
August 01 to August 15 2008
- Leg 6:** Holyhead to Port Carlisle 185 NM  
August 17 to August 31 2008
- Leg 7:** Port Carlisle to Cullipool 300 NM  
September 05 to October 05 2008  
Via NE coast of Ireland. Mileages on this leg will remain flexible.



Paul Owen receives the Red Cedar paddle on behalf of the BCU.





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## Do you live in?

Leeds? Leeds is the central constituency of Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP and covers the city centre, Woodhouse, Little London, Lincoln Green, Richmond Hill, Osmondthorpe, Halton Moor, Hunslet, Belle Isle, Beeston, Holbeck, Cottingley and New Wortley.

Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP is the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and is one of the key people to lobby in terms of changing the access.

His website is [www.hilarybenn.org/](http://www.hilarybenn.org/) on which he states, "As MP for Leeds Central I always do my best to help my constituents. You can get in touch with me, whether it's a personal, constituency or political issue."

Please go and visit him. Let him know about canoeing and what a true sport for all it is, regardless of age or ability. Also let him know about the access situation and how it affects you, your friends and indeed members of the general public... Access would provide millions of people, including canoeists, anglers, walkers, boaters and other interest groups, with more opportunities to recreate near their homes on various waters in a range of recreational disciplines.

MPs will generally take notice of political issues if they are informed of them by and are relevant to a member of their constituency (i.e. one of their voters).

Write to or visit: **Constituency Office Hilary Benn MP, 2 Blenheim Terrace, Leeds LS2 9JG. Tel: 0113 244 1097**

Go along and meet him... the whole experience will be interesting and informative too.

## Do you live in the Chatham and Aylesford constituency?

This includes: Blue Bell Hill, Burham, Chatham Central, Ditton, Eccles, Horsted, Larkfield, Lordswood, Luton, Princes Park, Snodland, Walderslade, Wayfield, Weedswood and Wouldham

The MP here is Jonathan Shaw. He is Parliamentary Under-Secretary (Marine, Landscape and Rural Affairs) and Minister for the South East. He is another person who we need to talk with. We have tried and at a recent Parliamentary Waterways meeting to ask a question about voluntary access agreements, but were completely brushed off. We did however discover that he has canoed and can even do an Eskimo roll.

So go and see him, tell him about the access issue, how you are affected by it and invite him to come along for a canoe with you.

Contact him via:  
[www.jonathanshaw.org.uk/home](http://www.jonathanshaw.org.uk/home)

Write to or visit: **Constituency Office, 411 High Street, Chatham, Kent, ME4 4NU. Tel: 01634 811573**

Jonathan's job is to represent his constituents. This includes everyone living within the constituency boundaries, no matter what your political beliefs!

## New Early Day Motion launched by John Grogan MP (Selby) – ask your MP to sign it

### 1331 - RIVER ACCESS FOR NON-POWERED CRAFT

*"That this House urges the Government to extend legislation on access to the countryside in England and Wales to allow canoeists and users of non-powered craft similar access rights to water as walkers have to the land; notes that in Scotland such access, accompanied by a code of rights and responsibilities for all concerned, has been successfully implemented; and believes that increased access to waterways would lead to greater participation in canoeing, resulting both in obvious health benefits to the nation and in increased chances of future Olympic success."*

Up to us now to push it. Ask your MP to sign the EDM, you can e-mail them to ask but you can also go and visit them too. Find out who your MP is by visiting: [www.parliament.uk/directories/hc/ists/alms.cfm](http://www.parliament.uk/directories/hc/ists/alms.cfm)

They need to know how much the lack of access affects our sport and in fact all members of the public! If you want help writing a letter or need facts and figures, contact [info@riversaccess.org](mailto:info@riversaccess.org) and we can send you supporting material.

## You can support this petition too!

There is a petition up for access to water. This has been done to support the EDM because the petitioner decided that although he can try and ask his MP to sign the EDM what is also needed is an opportunity to express our support, in our own way, through this petition.

Only MPs can sign the EDM and many are 'unable' to sign EDMs because of their position in Government/Opposition, but we can support the petition. John Grogan can use the numbers on the petition as a lever to get in to talk to other MPs and Ministers on our behalf.

## The petition

*"We the undersigned petition the Prime Minister to introduce legislation for Public Access to Inland Waters in England and Wales. Access rights would be supported by an Access Code to enshrine rights with personal and environmental responsibilities and a basis to resolve any interaction issues."*

*Legislation would provide the public, and users of other non-powered craft the same access rights and responsibilities as those provided for all in Scotland through the Land Reform Act (Scotland) 2003; where users have access to and can pass along inland waters."*

To support the petition visit:  
<http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/RiversAccess/>

## Same old myths from Martin Salter MP!

**Martin Salter MP has again put up an amendment to John Grogan's EDM 1331 - RIVER ACCESS FOR NON-POWERED CRAFT. He is once more putting out misinformation about what we (and members of the public are campaigning for) and continues to view the issue as a canoeing versus angling issue, which is far from the truth.**

We have in fact met with Martin Salter MP, who did offer to form a joint working party to look at an access code. Nothing has come of this so we have drafted our own (in consultation with others and related to English Law) to support a Public Access to Inland Waters Bill. The Bill ran out of Parliamentary time last year, but will go back in again in the next session of Parliament. Clarity of access is needed so that an access code can be developed and adhered to.

We are not asking for anything unreasonable, because it works extremely well in Scotland. Scotland is now benefiting from increased tourism because of it.

What we are asking for is not un-fettered access as Mr Salter states it, but access for all, with responsibilities. It is not about trespassing across





private land, it is about all of us accessing water and using the rivers and inland waters appropriately.

We are aware that there is a perceived conflict between the different users, particularly with fishing. We understand that in reality as access is increased and therefore intense use of a few sites removed, any conflicts will diminish.

Very few anglers would be affected by the proposed legislation. Many anglers pursue their sport in specially provided still water fisheries, on the sea or large rivers where fishing and boating interests have had shared use for many years, an example being the River Thames. Many of our angling friends now fish from kayaks so access to the inland waters would support this rapidly growing part of the sport too.

The Rivers Access Campaign regularly receives support from anglers who feel that they want more opportunities for fishing and now as the sport of kayak/fishing is growing rapidly they too need more places to go. (Anglers themselves in their own publications are saying 'Keep rivers for all - not just the select few' - Anglers Mail 5/6/07)

## See what we are up against!

In the latest edition of the CLA (Country Landowners Association) Business Directory there is a section titled 'CLA - Working for you'. Within this particular section the CLA are quite vitriolic about stopping access to rivers and woodlands.

They state, "as a consequence of CLA building strong links with anglers, we were able to resist calls by canoeists for an unrestricted access to rivers and riverbanks in England and Wales. The so-called 'right to row'. The Environment Agency subsequently followed a voluntary approach for delivering canoe access and the Government thanked the CLA for its support."

Whilst 'politics' may be going on in the background in terms of blocking access, the reason the Public Access to Inland Waters Bill was not read a second time was due to Parliamentary time and not the CLA.

Within the same section, the CLA say they are leading a campaign against access as of right to coastal areas. They state they are continuing to query the public demand for such a right and argue that local voluntary access agreements (VAA's) are the most effective way of going about this. Natural England (who as part of the DEFRA family in the coastal access consultation) state that VAA's are:

- Unable to deliver permanent and secure access
- Unfit to tackle long standing resistance to access
- Piecemeal and not continuous

Natural England also states that, access would be shown on web sites and not on Ordnance Survey.

The Rivers Access Campaign is asking for rights with responsibilities, in a similar way to the access situation in Scotland, where an Access Code exists.

## Does canoeing disturb fish or fish stocks?

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

## The Environment

Canoeists are environmentally aware and wish to enjoy and support the natural environment. Canoeists pick up rubbish and many clubs and individuals often take part (and organise) river clear ups.

It is time that the debate was moved on in the media and that Mr Salter MP moves away from angling v canoeing and looks at the real issues surrounding the problems.

With 2012 around the corner one of the best legacies that could be left to all members of the public is a legacy of access to water.

Keep up to date with the news and views at [www.riversaccess.org](http://www.riversaccess.org)



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Above: Beijing slalom course



Much has been heard about the Olympics in recent months and when this summer's Olympics close, the talk will not fade as we will be gearing ourselves up for London 2012. But for the athletes the 2008 Olympics have been very much in their mind, lives

and training schedules for many years. Training programmes have been set around being in top condition for the selection events and then the Olympics itself. All those frosty and dark winter mornings when most of us just turn over in bed, our athletes have been out training and preparing themselves for this summer. For many of us the only way we are going to be able to support them is from home, so here is a guide to where and when the competitions are happening.



## Team GB

Every two years the team represents Great Britain in the summer or winter Olympic Games. The team is selected by the British Olympic Association, in conjunction with the governing bodies, from the best sportsmen

and women to compete in 28 summer and seven winter Olympic sports at the greatest sporting event in the world.

The sportsmen and women who are selected to participate for GB at the Olympic Games become members of the Great Britain Olympic Team: Team GB. There is not an Olympic swimming team or Olympic rowing team. The individual sports join to become Team GB, the Great Britain Olympic Team.

All of Team GB will have our support but this particular article is about our slalom and flat water athletes (and coaches) who we wish the very best.

## Flatwater Racing/Canoe/Kayak Slalom

Both of the canoeing disciplines will take place at the new Olympic Rowing and Canoeing Park.

## Shunyi Olympic Rowing-Canoeing Park

**Location:** Mapo Village, Shunyi District, Beijing  
**Floor area (sq m):** 31,850  
**Permanent seats:** 1,200  
**Temporary seats:** 25,800 (10,000 for standing seats)

## Dates for competition

### Canoe/kayak – flat water

18-23rd August 2008

**Finals:** 22-23rd August

### Canoe/kayak – slalom

11-14th August 2008

**Finals:** 12th and 14th August

Check the television schedules for when the canoeing events will be actually aired. The BBC will have thousands of hours of coverage, so we will be able to see all of the action.



## Useful links

The Official Beijing Olympics site: <http://en.beijing2008.cn>  
 The British Olympic Association:  
[www.olympics.org.uk/beijing2008](http://www.olympics.org.uk/beijing2008)  
 BCU: [www.bcu.org.uk](http://www.bcu.org.uk)  
 GB Canoeing: [www.worldclass-canoeing.org.uk](http://www.worldclass-canoeing.org.uk)

## The Support Team

**Performance Director:** John Anderson, World Class Olympic Podium Programmes

**National Performance and Team Manager for slalom:** John McLeod

**Head slalom coach and coach for Campbell Walsh:** Jurg Gotz

**Slalom coach for David Florence:** Mark Delaney

**Slalom coach for Fiona Pennie:** Shaun Pearce

**National Performance and Team Manager for flat water racing:** Alan Williams

**Coach for Tim Brabants:** Eric Farrell and Shaun Caven

## The Beijing Olympic symbol



Every emblem of the Olympics tells a story. The Beijing 2008 Olympic Games emblem 'Chinese Seal, Dancing Beijing' and is said to be filled with Beijing's hospitality and hopes and carries the city's commitment to the world.

## Olympic mascots



All of the Olympics have mascots and not all are easily recognisable or understood so to help you out – the colour of the five mascots comes from the Olympic rings.

'Fuwa' (see image) will serve as the Official Mascots of Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, carrying a message of friendship, peace and good

wishes from China to children all over the world.

Designed to express the playful qualities of five little children who form an intimate circle of friends, Fuwa also embody the natural characteristics of four of China's most popular animals; the Fish, the Panda, the Tibetan Antelope, the Swallow and the Olympic Flame.

Each of Fuwa has a rhyming two-syllable name, a traditional way of expressing affection for children in China. Beibei is the Fish, Jingjing is the Panda, Huanhuan is the Olympic Flame, Yingying is the Tibetan Antelope and Nini is the Swallow.

When you put their names together; 'Bei Jing Huan Ying Ni', they say "Welcome to Beijing" offering a warm invitation that reflects the mission of Fuwa as young ambassadors for the Olympic Games.

Fuwa also embody both the landscape and the dreams and aspirations of people from every part of the vast

# mpics 2008



Left: Model of slalom and regatta courses in Shunyi. Above: View from the team hotel

country of China. In their origins and their headpieces, you can see the five elements of nature; the sea, forest, fire, earth and sky, all stylistically rendered in ways that represent the deep traditional influences of Chinese folk art and ornamentation.

### Team GB members

The Slalom athletes going to Beijing were announced by the British Canoe Union and the British Olympic Association on 21st May and the team consists of:

Campbell Walsh (Men's K1), Fiona Pennie (Women's K1) and David Florence (Men's C1).

The flat water racing Team GB athletes, have not yet been announced, but will be at the end of June. It is clear however, that Tim Brabants and Lucy Wainwright will be nominated to the BOA to be part of Team GB.

In the August issue, there will be a full low down on the Team GB members.



## How hard is it to get to the Olympic Games as a canoeist?

**The answer is simply – hard. Not only do you have to be excellent in your chosen area of sport, but you also have to obtain the small number of places available to each class. The numbers of places are allocated according to continents. As a team we have often had to leave many excellent athletes behind as we have filled our quota!**

### Olympic Games – canoeing athlete quotas

The table below shows the athlete quota places across the two Olympic disciplines. Compared to the quotas in 1992 and 1996 there has been a significant reduction. This reduction was mainly brought about by the removal of slalom from the Sydney Olympic Games and the allocation of the slalom athlete places to another sport. However, after much lobbying, slalom was reintroduced into the Olympic programme; this was only agreed on the basis that the slalom athlete numbers came from the flat water quotas.

Canoeing lost 150 athlete places and flat water was reduced by 82 to give slalom a 'reasonable' number of competitors.

	Flat water	Slalom	Total
Quotas 1992/1996	350	135	485
Quota 2000	267	83	350
Quota 2004/2008*	247	83	330*

\* Unfortunately 20 of the flat water racing athletes (worldwide) did not compete in Sydney so the numbers were again reduced for Athens 2004 and Beijing 2008.

The ratio of men to women is quite different because women do not compete in the canoe classes and only race over 500m in Flatwater.

### In slalom there are four events, as follows:

MK1	21 Boats
WK1	21 Boats
C1	16 Boats
C2	12 Boats

Unfortunately, the numbers of athletes have reduced since 1996 and now only one boat in each of these four slalom events can qualify.

For GB this is very harsh as there are a number of athletes who have achieved top ten places at World Championships who will not be able to compete at the Olympic Games due to the quota restrictions.

### In flatwater racing there are 12 events as follows:

Men Kayak - 5 Events	Women Kayak - 3 Events
MK1 500M 14 Boats	WK1 500M 10 Boats
MK1 1000M 14 Boats	WK2 500M 10 Boats
MK2 500M 10 Boats	WK4 500M 14 Boats
MK2 1000M 10 Boats	
MK4 1000M 10 Boats	

### Men Canoe - 4 Events

MC1 500M	12 Boats
MC1 1000M	12 Boats
MC2 500M	10 Boats
MC2 1000M	10 Boats

In flat water racing, due to the restriction placed on the total number of athletes and the IOC's (International Olympic Committee) desire to ensure global participation, (universality ie giving continental places to athletes who are not necessarily the world's best) it is very difficult to qualify athletes for the Games.

In athletics, swimming and rowing, the athlete quotas are significantly higher than canoeing. In canoeing there are 16 medal events in the Olympic programme. Rowing only have 14 medal events but they have significantly more places, rowing contests their 14 medals with 480 athletes.

So we wish the canoeists all the best in their quest for Olympic medals. They deserve their places and have worked for years to achieve them.

## I would like to be an Olympic athlete one day. Where do I begin?

There are many opportunities for you to excel in the sport of canoeing and then to specialise in either flat water or slalom, the two Olympic disciplines.

Across the country there are many clubs where you can learn to canoe and experience slalom and flat water paddling. Many who take up flat water racing (sprint) start by participating in marathon races and these happen most weekends all around the country. ([www.marathon-canoeing.org.uk](http://www.marathon-canoeing.org.uk))

There is a development pathway you can follow and there are many events to take part in.

### Flat water

Racing takes place in singles, doubles and fours in both canoe and kayak classes.

In Britain, racing is based around five national regattas at the National Water Sports Centre, in Nottingham and on the proposed Olympic course in Dorney, with an interclub championship and senior age group included. There are also a number of local regattas run at various sites around the country during the season.

A mini sprint series for juniors has begun. The mini sprints include events in crew boats too. This means as well as paddling in a K1 (lightning) you are also able to compete in a Huddy K2 or the Rocket K4.

More information about the regattas can be found on the Wey Kayak Club web site: [www.weykayak.co.uk](http://www.weykayak.co.uk).

### Slalom

In slalom racing there are plenty of opportunities to get involved, whatever your current paddling ability. Whitewater slalom, which was originally modelled on ski slalom, began in Switzerland in 1932. Slalom canoeing began on flat water, but soon switched to white water rapids on natural rivers. The aim is to run a rapid river course marked by 'gates' fast, and without touching or missing gates.

A 'gate' is two poles, suspended over the water. Green and white gates are negotiated in a downstream direction, red and white gates upstream. The gates are placed so that you must make tricky cross-current moves and use the eddies and waves.

The skill, strength and courage of the paddler pitted against powerful water makes slalom an exciting sport to take part in and watch.

There are races for one-person kayaks and for one-person and two-person canoes – Men's K1, Women's K1, C1 and C2. A K1 is a one-seater kayak - you sit in it and use a paddle with blades at both ends. A C1 canoe, is a boat you kneel in and use with a one-bladed paddle.

A C2 is for two paddlers, kneeling and with single-blade paddles.

Have a look at the slalom web site [www.canoeslalom.co.uk](http://www.canoeslalom.co.uk) to find out what events you can get involved in.

Have a look at the slalom technique video too [www.slalomtechnique.co.uk](http://www.slalomtechnique.co.uk).

Each of the two Olympic disciplines have athlete development plans and pathways to help you succeed... there is a lot open to you.

Information on the GB teams and news from international and national events can be found on [www.gbcanoeing.org.uk](http://www.gbcanoeing.org.uk). This web site also includes GB paddler profiles.

## A popular comment made by recreational paddlers is one similar to the below

**Q:** I am a recreational paddler and see no benefit to our sport for our involvement in the Olympics. All the training and competition is just an expensive waste of money isn't it?

**A:** For canoeing the Olympics helps to raise its profile. In Athens 2004 the slalom competition was the third most watched sport during the Olympic Games.

The money received for training and ultimately the money received for sending athletes to the Olympics comes largely from lottery money and is distributed by UK Sport for the specific purpose of excelling in major events, particularly the Olympic games.

Although not everybody's cup of tea, the Olympics provides outstanding opportunities for anyone seeking healthy enjoyment. The focus of the country will be on sport, recreation and participation; indeed most people won't go anywhere near Olympic competition yet will benefit from government expenditure in facilities and its desire to drive forward health and wellbeing images.

Our own white water course in Broxbourne will be used by recreational canoeists for years to come. This would not have come about if had not been for the Olympic Games funding. In turn this funding has levered further contributions from the partners: East of England Development Agency, Sport England and Lee Valley Park. The Olympic Games also provides a focal point to get things done within a defined timescale, for example improvements to our infrastructure and transportation.

Canoeing is certainly not all about international competition and the Olympics, but the Olympics are a platform to promote sport, recreation, facilities and much, much more.

# Broxbourne White Water Canoe Centre

## an exciting new development for our sport!



One of the most exciting developments for our sport, as a result of London hosting the 2012 Olympic Games, is the new white water canoe centre which will be built to support the slalom competition during the 2012 Games. The new centre will be located adjacent to the Lee Valley Regional Park Showground facilities, in the borough of Broxbourne, off the A121, between Waltham Cross and Waltham Abbey.

This is excellent news for canoeists and potential canoeists in the surrounding regions and for all those across the country. The site has good transport links, with the M25 less than one kilometre away and rail links within walking distance of the course.

The course is now in the planning permission stage with the relevant authorities. Once through the planning stages, the ground excavation and building works are scheduled to start in early 2009, with the course ready for testing and training at the end of 2010 into early 2011.

The venue will include a self-contained body of water, which will feed via a system of pumps, the main Olympic Games course plus a second course to be used for training which is independent from the main course.

There will be capacity for up to 12,000 spectators to sit and watch the slalom during the qualifications and finals events. The seating, like a number of other Games venues, will be of a temporary nature and along with other equipment specific to 2012, will be removed after the competition has finished.

The main course for the Games is 300 metres in length, falling 5.5 metres from the start pool to the finish. The training course is to be 160 metres in length, with an overall fall of 1.6 metres. With the different grades of water that will be on offer, this will provide facilities for regional, national and international events for the future. The Lee Valley Regional Park Authority, who will manage the course, intend that the facilities will become a major leisure attraction for canoeing and rafting across the region.

The BCU have been involved with this project from the start, providing information on course design and event needs among other aspects. This new venue will be a extremely significant development for our sport and a fantastic legacy for us all when the Olympic Games have finished. It will be a super venue for our athletes to train on as well as providing other canoeists a fantastic place on which to learn how to canoe or to hone their skills.

We will keep you updated regularly as to the progress of this fantastic development.





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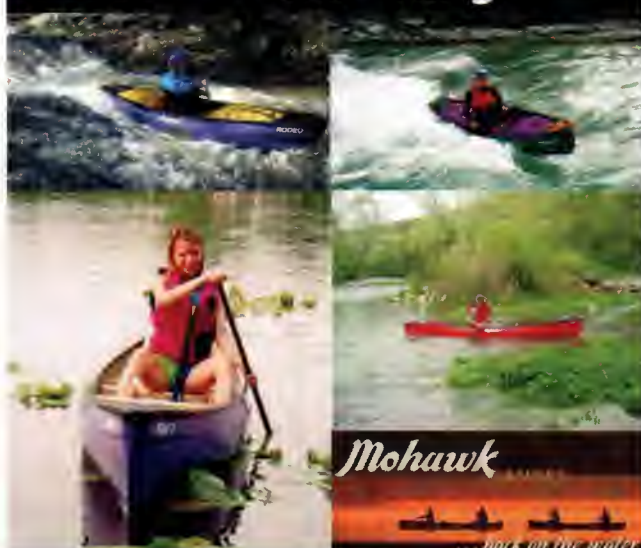
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## Resident's rapids response

I always enjoy reading of the exploits from the 'other end' of the village in The Village News but there are disquieting matters that have been troubling those of us 'down the valley'.

How many of you are aware that our Symonds Yat Rapids are to be developed into a national canoe centre? It is proposed that permanent heavy rock groynes be built into the river-bed to improve the rapids for the canoeists.

The BCU may consider this an improvement, but there are many who see it as a rather one-sided project. My own concerns are for the open canoes in which families like to potter down river during the summer months, to whom more challenging rapids could come as a shock.

For many centuries the Wye has been subject to various laws to ensure that everyone had the right of free passage on the river. Any man-made obstructions were illegal and many were, in the past, ordered to be pulled down.

There are those who are worried that any permanent barriers could well be an additional hazard in a river already prone to flooding. We are assured by the applicants that this will not happen – mind you, riverside dwellers see huge trees sail by in flood waters. I suppose we can always say, "Told you so," whilst mopping up after the results of trees damming up the river across the groynes.

How come that Hereford Council is supporting the application, as are the Environment Agency (who gave the BCU £50,000 of taxpayers' money towards this scheme) and Natural England, who look after our natural environment? It appears that it will obviously be nodded through.

There are implications of interference to free passage of other vessels, and environment issues (the island is otter habitat). Give them their due, the BCU has instigated investigations into the environmental side of this development and of course, the results that they have published show glowing reports.

Don't get me wrong – we all enjoy watching the canoes paddle by, but they are already, at times, becoming a nuisance to other river users - the majority are amateurs and we would hate to see accidents. The BCU tell us that the sport is expanding at a rate that will mean double the numbers in five years.

We feel that the Yat has come to saturation point where traffic is concerned. Never mind the 'lost' tourists who ignore 'No Through Road' signs and haven't yet learnt how to use reverse – just think what amusement an increase in canoe trailers will bring!

So if you feel like a walk 'down the valley' go and have a look – it's very pretty in the woods at this time of the year, although canoes have already eroded the banks at the head of the rapids. [www.yatrapids.co.uk](http://www.yatrapids.co.uk) makes the whole project look spectacular – but is it what we need here and are there more hidden problems?

By the time this is printed the application will have come before the council (30th April). But... just maybe... it won't get passed without some further discussion.

**JOHN AND CHRISTINE BLOWS, SYMONDS YAT WEST**

# Canoe England sites to receive 'in river' works



**Later this summer, low river levels permitting, Canoe England's (CE) Washburn and Symonds Yat canoeing venues are set to receive stabilisation improvements to their river bed, and wildlife habitats.**

The Washburn is set to receive eight new water features from the stepped weir downstream. Gabions damaged in a recent flood will be removed and a new, alternative river exit point for paddlers provided to the left bank immediately up stream of the A59 bridge. The work will include a widening and extension to the left bank access track towards the lake, plus, a turning area to facilitate an internal shuttle bus. Enhancements will also be provided to dragonfly, wetland and other habitat.

Work is to be scheduled to commence the first week in August, with the 'in river' works completed by early September. The Washburn Calendar will run as normal with the contractor pulling out of the river in time for events to be run as is usual.

These improvements are being funded by a strategic CCDP grant of £120,000 plus £15,000 from Washburn funds.

In a separate Washburn development, the former Yorkshire Water Wood Yard and Depot at Blubberhouses was purchased on the 1st of May by CE. It will be brought into use later this year as an 'event' car park and used in conjunction with the new left bank exit point.

The lease for canoeing in the Washburn Valley has been renewed with Yorkshire Water Services Ltd for a further 25 years. These renewal negotiations have also resulted in CE obtaining access to the surface of Thruscross reservoir. Two trial canoeing events are being held this year with access from the former sailing club site. It is hoped to use the reservoir for 1km Sprint, WWR training, and other discipline events. Open canoe sailing, canoe orienteering, and recreational cruising are also being trialed.

Further improvements to the Washburn are planned, not just to the river, but also to traffic management, parking and health and safety. Paddlers must acquaint themselves of these changes when first entering the site.

At Symonds Yat, the groynes to the left of the island channel are due to be replaced during September and up to October the 15th this year. Again, this is subject to a low river level being

available at the time. Habitat and stabilisation works are going to be carried out to the common land island.

Can paddlers please note that during the work the Wye Navigation will be closed for a length of 250m to all craft at this point and the rapids will not be available to paddlers either.

Machines, coffer dams and other equipment will be standing in the middle of the river. The old groynes will be removed and replaced with rocks of up to five tons.

A portage for paddlers will be available down the right bank from a point just upstream to a point just below the island. The contractor will be accessing the river from the left bank and temporary intermittent closures and diversions of both of the left bank's public footpath and cycleway will be in operation. Details will be available from the Royal Lodge Hotel with a summary from the Saracens Head Inn and the Wydean Canoe Centre. All are located on the left bank at Symonds Yat East.

This project is being financed by a £120,000 grant from CCDP, £25,000 from 'Advantage West Midlands – Market Town Initiative money' with the balance to £165,000 from the Symonds Yat Preservation Group. More money is still needed. CE has provided officer time, legal and interim financial assistance. Chris Hawkesworth of CE's Facilities Department has led the latest rounds of work to both sites. A CE client team has been built up of Dave Hemsley and Dean Field of co-ordinating Architects S&P. Detailed 'in river' and other designs have come from Andy Laird of EPD Ltd, plus wildlife, environmental statements and surveys are being carried out by Creswell Associates, the Environment Agency (EA) and Hyder Consulting. Lots of help has been provided by the volunteers of the Washburn Committee and the SYPG and the users of both sites. Councillors and officers of Harrogate Borough and Herefordshire County, Parish Councils, Natural England, the EA, Forest Enterprise, the Open Space Society, angling groups and riparian owners, local residents, wild life groups, ramblers and commercial organisations and other too numerous to name individually have all helped.

Further details are available on the Facilities section of: [www.bcu.org.uk](http://www.bcu.org.uk), Washburn: [www.yorcie.org.uk](http://www.yorcie.org.uk), Symonds Yat: [www.yatrapids.co.uk](http://www.yatrapids.co.uk)

## Chris Hawkesworth's response

**The following article appeared in the Parish Newsletter of Symonds Yat West and relates to the Symonds Yat Preservation Group and Canoe England's land drainage and planning consents for our proposed 'in river and island stabilisation work' at Symonds Yat.**

John Blows and his wife Christine have objected to our proposals. John put his views and those of his neighbours very well and I have agreed to publish his article (left) unedited.

John and his wife came to a public meeting held earlier this year to look into our proposals held at the Royal Lodge Hotel. A conversation with them yielded the fact that they lived near the launching spot illustrated in the pictures. This is the point where paddlers launch back into the river having portaged up the right (west) bank of the Wye after running the rapids.

Like a lot of things, John and Christine's views were not all directly related to our

proposed works but more to the behaviour and habits of us paddlers.

In particular it was to seal launching with the resulting bank erosion and damage to fragile environmental habitats and silts that indiscriminate and ill thought out use results. In the pictures the erosion can clearly be seen and with a bit of thought is totally unnecessary.

I have had similar complaints from the Parish Council at Lazonby on the River Eden and other points in the country. I seal launch myself and in general never give it a second thought. But the more I look into this the more I realise how damaging it is and how wide we paddlers leave ourselves open to environmental criticism.

And I agree, at the Yat this practice is nothing short of environmental vandalism. I know modern spraydecks are difficult to put on the cockpit rim. But you can put them on sat on the beach below this spot.

This portage path at the Yat also goes around the walls of an old mill and iron foundry. Paddlers have been dragging their boats over the walls and dislodging stones and wearing the footpath both away and wider into very soft silt. Simply picking up your boat would stop this.

In short leave seal launching to the seals, they don't have legs and pick your boat up... it'll last longer.

**CHRIS HAWKESWORTH  
Planning and Facilities Manager and he that has to handle the complaints.**



# Background information to Canoe England's access policy

**Most countries in the world do not have blanket access restrictions to and along inland waters. In these countries, access to large and small inland water is open to all.**

Where these rights exist in other countries, there is little if any conflict between land ownership, other water interests and users.

However, in England and Wales, the public cannot assume there is an automatic right of access to inland water.

- There are 70,600km of inland waterways in England and Wales; 66,000km of these have disputed public access.
- This represents over 96% of the river systems.
- The present legal situation is unfavourable for access.
- Owners of river beds and banks have riparian property rights, but do not own the water.
- Riparian owners attempt to exercise control over access to inland waters where they claim there is not a public right of access.
- Research has revealed that prior to 1830, it was generally accepted that the public as a right had historically used rivers. Legal opinions since that time have diminished this accepted right creating a lack of certainty for such a right. There is strength of evidence to conclude that a right to use inland waterways under Common Law has been usurped in the last 180 years.
- If you are paddling where there is no identified public right of navigation, without permission, then you may be trespassing.

Access to inland water in England for canoeing, is becoming increasingly restricted, this is for a variety of reasons, although the principle reason stems from the lack of certainty surrounding the rights and responsibilities of riparian owners. Some riparian owners consider that there is no right of access to water on their land, while others are concerned over liability issues.

However even those inland waters with proven historical rights are increasingly being disputed, and where the actual navigation rights are not in dispute, there is often controversy over ingress (get in) and egress (get out) rights.

This lack of legal certainty over access to inland water, that canoeists and other water

users encounter, strengthens the argument that access rights to inland water needs clarification.

Voluntary access agreements are often cited as being the answer to this problem; Canoe England however considers that this is not an appropriate long term solution. See Canoe England Voluntary Access Policy document for more information on this subject.

This position is supported by Government's decision in 2000 to legislate to provide a public right of access to heath, down, moor, land above 600m and registered common and has since been further reinforced by the current proposals within the Marine Bill to create a legally defined coastal access strip within England for the public's benefit.

Canoe England considers that the only sensible way forward is for Government to enact legislation, providing a right of responsible access to inland water in England. This would provide clarity for all, while not eroding rights. Additionally if legislation were to follow the model set by the Scottish Land Reform Act 2003 and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, concerns over land owner liability would also be addressed.

For these reasons, Canoe England will work with its partners and supporters for the introduction of primary legislation, confirming a right of responsible unrestricted access to inland water in England to be as of right.

## Canoe England Access Policy



The word 'access' includes access to and along linear waterways, the coast and also access to specific water sites and appropriate sporting facilities. The provision and improvement of access for canoeing in all its forms is very much encouraged by Canoe England. The overall objective is to increase the number of canoeing opportunities and the introduction of new legislation to give certainty for a right of access to inland waters and the coast.

Paddlers are encouraged to enjoy water responsibly in ways that are compatible with the conservation of the environment and wildlife.

## Myths and realities – access in Scotland

**Q. So now it is free-for-all in Scotland – you can do what you like?**

A. Definitely no – access to the vast majority of both land and water in Scotland is open to all, but it comes with responsibility – respecting the rights of others to carry out legal activities as farming, angling. Access also comes with understanding personal responsibilities.

**Q. How do I do that?**

A. Find out about access before you visit – by using the SCA web site, reading the Scottish Outdoor Access Code (SOAC), using the SCA's River Advisers and if still in doubt, asking the SCA's Access and Environment Officer.

**Q. I have heard that we can camp anywhere now?**

A. Basically, yes, but, again, by using common sense – SOAC says that you can camp in small groups for a short time e.g. one or two nights. The SCA Wild Camping Code is now on our web site – please read it! You should not camp within the curtilage of a house (the garden).

**Q. I have heard that canoeists have been breaking access agreements in Scotland?**

A. No, because there are no such things in Scotland – access is the right of every individual, and it cannot be taken away by anybody else e.g. by the SCA on behalf of members. There are no 'agreements' taking away access due to angling or anything else, so any stories you have heard about a 'non-canoeing river' are inaccurate and spurious. It is believed that a few landowners and anglers have been spreading stories that are, basically, incorrect.

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



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## Water Framework Directive – use and access of waterbodies in England and Wales

The BCU has responded to a research study on behalf of the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). The project is being led by the University of Brighton.

### Purpose of study

Defra is leading a collaborative programme of research on assessing the costs and benefits of options in river basin management for implementing the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD). The project aims to obtain information on physical waterbody attributes and user behaviour to assist research and development linked to river basin management plans, which will design and locate water quality and quantity improvements. It is part of the wider Collaborative Research Programme on River Basin Management Planning Economics (see: [www.defra.gov.uk/environment/water/wfd/economics/research.htm](http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/water/wfd/economics/research.htm)) which is funded by Defra, the Environment Agency and Natural England amongst other organisations.

Defra sought responses to key issues concerning the implementation of the WFD – in particular, how water quality and water quantity is affecting or will affect participation rates and activity types in your sport or recreational activity. Defra also required further information on users, use and access to complete a review of background information on consumption, use and access on waterbodies in England and Wales.

The BCU provided information on the well documented position of poor public access to and along water especially for canoeing; again raised concern on the absence of a representative from the boating and recreation sector on all but two of the ten River Basin Liaison Panels and the low profile from a stakeholders viewpoint of cost benefit analysis and dis-proportionate costs.

## Marine Bill and coastal access

On 3rd April the government published the draft Marine Bill. The draft Bill is based on the Government's 2005 election manifesto commitment to "introduce a new framework for the seas based on marine spatial planning, that balances conservation, energy and resource needs. To obtain best value from different uses of our valuable marine resources, we must maintain and protect the ecosystems on which they depend."

The BCU had responded to the earlier White Paper and will contribute to the further consultations with the draft Bill to ensure our interests are registered for navigating tidal waters and access to the coast.

Part 9 of the draft Bill contains provisions for improving access to the English coast.

The Bill will place a duty on the Secretary of State and Natural England to secure a long distance route (the English coastal route) and land available for open-air recreation (spreading room) accessible to the public around the coast of England.

The draft Bill amends existing legislation – namely the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 – to provide a coastal margin, within which people will be able to walk a route the length of the English coast (with certain exceptions, including, for example, developed land, some Ministry of Defence land, land used as a park or garden, railways and quarries). In addition people will have access to coastal land such as beaches, cliffs, rocks and dunes, for the purposes of open-air recreation on foot.

The draft Bill has been published on the Defra web site. A link to it can be found at the following address together with explanatory notes, a policy document and an impact assessment:

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

The Government has also published a document that sets out the measures in an order under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, as provided for in the draft Marine Bill. Following Royal Assent of the Bill, there will be a consultation process on the details of such an order which must be approved by each House of Parliament. View the document at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/marine/legislation>

The publication of the Bill in draft allows for pre-legislative Parliamentary scrutiny and public consultation before being introduced to Parliament. Comments may be made on the draft Marine Bill during the pre-legislative scrutiny period and lodged by 26 June 2008 to:

[MarineBillTeam@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:MarineBillTeam@defra.gsi.gov.uk)

The Canoe England access and environment team would be pleased to receive comments on the draft Bill, from members. To contact the access team email [access@bcu.org.uk](mailto:access@bcu.org.uk)

Additionally, an announcement was made on Thursday 24th April 2008 that the Environment Food and Rural Affairs Committee (EFRA) has decided to undertake pre-legislative scrutiny of the coastal access provisions contained in Part 9 of the draft Marine Bill. Views were required by 19th May.

## Environment Agency

### Putting pilot voluntary access agreements in place (Brighton 3)

The 'Brighton 3' pilot schemes for canoe access based on the Rivers Teme, Wear, Waveney and Mersey were launched in October 2006 have been the subject of a post implementation review by the Environment Agency (EA). The report is expected to be available for June and posted on the EA web site.

Canoe England (CE) has maintained an overview of the pilot schemes and can report that the pilot scheme on the River Teme at Ludlow had been dormant. In April the EA advised that activity on an access agreement for the River Teme at Ludlow was to resume and progressed by Ludlow Town Council. The draft agreement produced in 2006 was criticised both on safety and the restrictive terms of use that reduced existing access. CE has since contacted Ludlow Town Council requesting that they revisit the draft agreement to promote canoeing and maintain the long standing custom and practice of paddling at Ludlow.

It is also evident to CE that the River Wear scheme remains compromised by a local resolve that rejects canoe access agreements and canoeing on the river.

As reported previously, the River Mersey pilot scheme is in use with limitations imposed by fenced and locked egress points that require notice to be opened. How these limitations impact on the level of use, is unclear.

On the River Waveney local reports indicate the level of access enjoyed from before the pilot scheme has been maintained. This includes the tidal section from Ellingham to Geldeston outside the scheme where canoeing was opposed and excluded as a condition of the agreement. Opposition has declined due in part to it becoming common knowledge a public right of navigation exists on this tidal section that is included in a canoe trail route promoted by the Broads Authority.

### EA – Strategic Planning for Water Related Recreation Pilot Schemes update

The pilot schemes are centred on the south west, east of England and Wales with the objective to produce a more strategic approach to planning recreational access to inland and coastal waters.

As reported previously for these pilot schemes a series of workshops attended

by CE representatives were arranged in the south west and east of England.

The first report to be published is for the south west and is available from [www.brighton.ac.uk/waterrecreation](http://www.brighton.ac.uk/waterrecreation) (48 pages in total). The report has an associated consultation document. CE is gaining views from national officers and the South West Development and Access team for inputs to the consultation. Voluntary access agreements are a feature of the report consistent with government policy.

A report for the East of England is expected to follow in June. The WCA are awaiting the release of the report for Wales that is understood to have been completed.

### EA – cutbacks in recreation function

The EA is reducing the number of Area Recreation Officers in each of their eight regions. Thames region has lost two of the three recreation officers. The EA say funding is an issue and the available resource will have a regional and strategic focus for influencing others such as the activity with strategic planning for water related sport and recreation.



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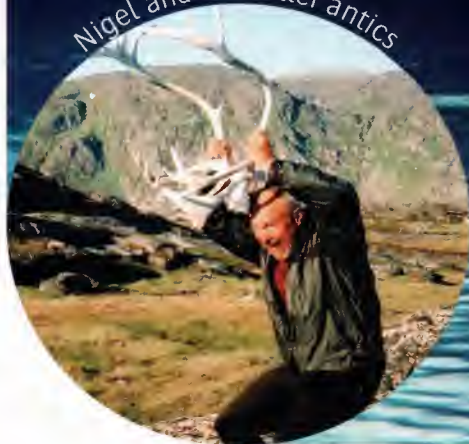
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# South Greenland Ice cap solo

It sounded like a high-velocity rifle shot. Two seconds later, I saw a block of ice, the size of a car, shear off the iceberg and slew into the water. A plume of spray shot out, showering the boat. Now unstable, the berg began to topple backwards. As it did so, it levered-up its underwater plinth of ice, which burst out of the water like a submarine surfacing. Then PANG! VAROOSH! It broke off, crashing back into the water. Eyes wide, heart pumping, I shot into a low-brace, as a shock wave coursed towards me. Nigel Gill shares his thoughts on a trip that had some moments of excitement!

Nigel and his antler antics



I've paddled abroad in the Mediterranean, Norway, New Zealand and Alaska, but for me South Greenland is the best. Pristine, untouched wilderness, icebergs the size of ships, an ice-cap smothering the inner land-mass, glaciers breaking into the sea, fjords bobbing with ice and surrounded by mountains, delightful wildlife, friendly Inuit people. There are boats available to hire and in the south, there's no significant danger from polar bears.

The section of ice cap I paddled around, is truly superb. Astonishingly blue ice, which really takes you back in time to see how the British mountains looked 18,000-years-ago – small rocky peaks poking out of a deep sea, of ice.

I never tired of the monolithic icebergs, the smaller bergy bits, fragmented brash ice, fascinating

sculptures, drifted by the wind, alive with noise – pips, tonks and pops. Sometimes the icebergs dramatically break apart or roll over. (It's definitely a good idea to give them some space).

My trip involved two phases. In the first, I spent five days paddling from the airport at Narsarsuaq to get to the ice cap. Then several days were spent exploring this very remote area where the ice cap enters the sea at different points.

The intention for Phase 2 was to re-supply then return to another area of the ice cap. But the fjord ice proved to be too dense. So instead, I paddled out of the fjords to explore a section of coast and visit one of the townships, Qaqortoq. In total, it was 360km and three weeks of paddling, starting in mid-June.



Off shore iceberg



Qaqortoq



Ice cap meets sea

I rented a Prijon Kodiak kayak, which was ideal for a sheltered expedition. I didn't see any other kayakers on the water and in the area of the ice cap, no other people.

Paddling alone, you don't have the pleasure of sharing the experience, but I like the greater sense of being next to nature and there's a higher level of adventure. The crucial thing is that you know what you're doing and can sort out most difficulties by yourself. If you have to wet exit, you must be able to get back in your boat quickly in any sea conditions. On the trip, the water was seriously cold and even if you are there as part of a group, everyone needs to be able to make speedy deep-water rescues..

In the fjords, it was mostly sheltered paddling. Only on one day did I have wind at Force 4 and lots of white caps on the water. But in the week after the trip I got to see the notorious Fohn wind that occasionally blows in towards the ice cap. The wind lasted for two days and gusts reached 55 knots – that's Storm Force 10!

The outer section of coast that I visited didn't have any sea ice (the frozen sea water that forms during the winter). However, there were some monstrous icebergs, ocean swells, large teams of hunting seals and (following a loudly exhaled "phoor" behind me) a couple of porpoises came right up, to eye me over.

The glaciers running off the ice cap are now moving unusually fast, probably due to the lubricating effect of melting water. This is flowing at a higher rate through global warming. What this means for boats is that there's a greater release of ice into the fjords, in places clogging them up with icebergs and brash and making a lot of manoeuvring necessary.

Where it's more dense, the moving kayak is constantly barging away blocks of floating ice, with a disarmingly loud clonk, that makes you apprehensive about holing the boat.

I found that fishing with a lure was easy, catching plenty of cod and the magnificent arctic char. These and mussels, fed me on most nights. Two poly-bags and a chunk of floating brash ice made an excellent refrigerator for that spare fillet of fish. A 10,000-year-old freezer – so very cool.

The fjord sides offer good hiking country and I walked at each camp spot. Walking near the ice cap,

I came across reindeer, where a young one was even more interested in me than I was in it. After initially running off, it returned to give me a good sniff. They were very mangy and I got the feeling that they would have liked nothing more than a cool bath in a large vat of insecticide.

#### Flies and mosquitoes

That is the one down side of the arctic regions in the summer – flies and mosquitoes are a pest in some places and you need to keep repellent and a head-net handy. In a town, I discovered that wearing a head-net, hat and sunglasses is quite a good way of amusing the locals and scaring the dogs.

The Inuit people are friendly and generous hearted. I sampled dried seal and whale, learned how to cook on an open fire using a flat stone and to make tea, from the prodigious wild thyme – it tastes like camomile.

Fifty years ago, many of the people were still hunter-gatherers, living off seal, whale, fish and berries. The remains of their primitive settlements can still be seen, as can those of the early

following a loudly exhaled "phoor" behind me) a couple of porpoises came right up, to eye me over

Viking settlers. My best find was a mould to make lead musket balls, which I handed to the local museum.

Hunting is still a popular activity, though outboards have replaced kayaks, however, the Greenlanders like to see people kayaking and admire their skills and courage. Whilst hunting, many Inuit kayakers met their death in the cold water.

Greenland is a Danish colony where at one place, a Danish official made it clear that while kayaking is admirable, after twenty days of it, I didn't smell too good. She very swiftly steered me "no offence" – to the community centre shower! Embarrassing, yes, but that water was bliss!

It's a pity that only a few paddlers visit this fantastic place. Greenland isn't cheap, but a superb two-week holiday, paddling to the ice cap, can be made without great organisational difficulty and total costs (including flights) needn't exceed £1,100. ●

**NIGEL GILL IS A BCU LEVEL 4 SEA COACH**



Skinned seals



Above: Ice cap vista. Below: Narsaq



# Youth – National

## 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 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.

### 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

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# Regional

## TEAM CENTRAL

### Eastern club forum

On Sunday 13th April 2008, representatives from clubs across the region gathered at the Bury St Edmund's Leisure Centre, for the first club forum in the east. This was an opportunity for the club members to network with each other, but primarily to meet the full time staff, listen to their presentation and then have the time to question the staff member in depth on the issues raised.

Sue Hornby, Director of Development for Canoe England, gave the keynote address, welcoming the 26 club representatives and taking questions on the recent developments from Canoe England. Sue then took over from Julia White, who had done



all the organising required for the forum, but had succumbed to illness on the day, delivering her update on the volunteers programme. After a short coffee break, Stuart Briggs, Central Senior Development Officer, explained to the assembled coaches and committee members the recent changes to the coaching scheme and the

## TEAM SOUTH

### Canoeists clean up

**Paddling through litter, be it on the bank or in the water is an unpleasant experience. For paddlers on the Thames and the Oxford canal it is a very common sight to see rubbish congregating in the locks and eddies.**

So, when the community-wide spring-clean of Oxford (OxClean) began to be advertised, members of the Oxford Falcon Rowing and Canoeing Club thought it the perfect opportunity to demonstrate how their paddling skills could be employed for the good of the environment.

The volume of litter collected within only a short distance of the club house was astonishing. Only as the task got underway did we realise just how polluted our waterways still are. In a couple of hours four wheelie bins and many more sacks had been filled with rubbish for recycling and landfill. Plastic bags, glass and plastic drinks bottles, fast-food containers and cans dominated the collection. The majority of this litter poses a problem for paddlers if we take a swim. It is also a problem for the wildlife on the river; herons, terrapins and the occasional kingfisher are all present here. In addition, it unfortunately seems that some fisherman are still not aware of the danger that abandoned knotted fishing wire with hooks, presents to river users. As users and lovers of our waterways, paddlers are in a unique position to also help maintain them. As publicity for the RAC (Rivers Access Campaign) spreads, being seen to be cleaning up our rivers and canals can only help to promote our image as conscientious users of the environment.

LAURA GILES

### Paddlesports success in north Cornwall

The vision:

**To establish a progressive and well supported structure within paddlesport that followed the principles of Long Term Paddler Development (LTPD) from the introductory stages of an individual's experience at the age of eight years, through to their potential introduction to competitive disciplines.**

In 2005 NCDC (North Cornwall District Council) was awarded £122,000 of lottery money to increase participation in sport. A policy decision was taken to have an exciting and dynamic program of outdoor activities, with the main focus on 11 - 16 year olds. From this came NCDC's Extreme Sports, aiming to attract young people who would not normally take part in a structured or team-based sport and would feel a greater affinity with kayaking.

A major part of the programme was the development of paddlesports within the district. NCDC purchased 40 kayaks meaning its four leisure centres now has their own fleet of kayaks and equipment allowing for the operation of regular pool sessions to which all ages are invited.

The pool sessions are also used as a feeder into the next step in the paddler's development, taking participants into the development phase of NCDC long-term plan or into the recreation side where white water, surf and sea kayaking are available. The first two phases of the development plan are now well established and the development of the final two phases: the Intermediate Pro Squad and Pro Squad

performance awards. This raised a lot of issues from the floor, as is expected of this emotive subject at the moment.

After lunch, the eight Child Protection/Welfare Officers from the clubs went with Sue into the dance studio, where they did the 'Time to Listen' course. The rest of the forum received a very entertaining and eye opening talk from Robert Deacon on insurance. He dismissed many of the urban myths that surround insurance in paddlesport and gave worthwhile information on what the BCU/CE insurance policy will and will not cover. Robert was followed by the regional development officer, Jeff Toser, for a short update on Clubmark and the changes to the Top Club accreditation.

On returning from tea, Stuart took on Julia's equity presentation and was followed by Andy Green, Access Officer for Canoe England, who gave an update as to where we are now and where we are aiming to be in the coming years. This was a very absorbing subject, just as provoking as the coaching presentation. After running nearly an hour over time, the discussion had to be cut short, as the time was fast approaching for us to close the Forum, and vacate the rooms. A quote from one of the delegates was "Thanks for today. I found it very useful and, scarily, I learnt some new and important information!"

Canoe England staff would like to thank members from Cambridge CC, Deben CC, Dereham Canoe Group, Eagle CC, Huntingdon CC, Ipswich CC, Lowestoft and District CC, Sudbury CC, Viking KC, Waveney Valley CC and Wensum Osprey's CC for making the day.



are progressing well. Sam Davenport of Bude and Philip Watson of Bideford both went on to achieve great results in the 2007 Surf World Championships where Sam picked up a second place and Philip a fourth place. The next challenge is to take this template and transfer it to other discipline specific areas within paddlesport.

### So how has it worked in practice?

#### Introductory stage

All the centres have always had facilities to engage young people in the fundamentals stage of development. The introduction of the kayaks and regular pool sessions has led to the centres investing in staff training so that pool sessions are led by either a BCU Level 1 or 2 Coach and aim to develop confidence and the skills required to progress to a stage where paddlers are able to take a 1 or 2 Star Award on open water.

#### 8-16 years development squads

Having completed the introductory stage the paddler will be relatively competent with the basics of kayaking and will now start to progress through the BCU Star Awards. There are also opportunities to try other aspects of the sport: surf kayaking, sea kayaking, whitewater and canoe polo. Should the paddler wish to progress further they will be able to move on to the next level of development with the guidance and approval of their coach.

#### 10-16 Years Intermediate Pro Squads

A strong element of the Intermediate Pro Squads is focused on developmental training and enabling the student to maximise their training time both in and out of the water. There are a series of development sessions for paddlers at this level. Each development session will look at a specific area of a paddler's development, for example training towards a 3 star award or a coaching day in a specific discipline. It is from here that students will have the opportunity to progress into the pro squads and then competition. **For further information please contact: Paul Meadows**

Email: [pmeadows@ncdc.gov.uk](mailto:pmeadows@ncdc.gov.uk) [www.ncdc.gov.uk/newhorizons](http://www.ncdc.gov.uk/newhorizons)

## TEAM NORTH

### Wye oh why?

Everyone has been complaining about the weather last summer (it was horrible!) and hoping this summer will be better. At a

Northern Star CC meeting last week we were remembering last summer and some of the places we went.

Near the end of the year we went on a journey along the River Wye. I was the youngest member of our team and think therefore that I should be the one to tell the tale of our journey.

The night before we set off the whole club came to my house, making sure we had packed the right stuff. One of the most important things we needed to take was food and extra clothes to keep us warm and give us energy.

We set off to Blackburn to meet some people and collect the minibus. There was also a dog that came with us she was called Cara, she was really cute.

It was about an hour before we stopped at the services. We bought more chocolate and biscuits just in case and then we set off again. We were driving for about another 90 minutes before we arrived at the river. We had something to eat, then we got all our kit on and finally set off down the river.

We were all in pairs and the dog was in a boat with two people.

Whilst travelling down the river we saw lots of memorable sights, there were two old people swimming naked, people fishing, lots of fish jumping up and many different kinds of animals, from dogs, to kingfishers and herons.

After nearly six hours of canoeing we arrived at the campsite. Well it was just a farm really. As we were getting out of our canoes we walked up a hill and we thought we were in the wrong place, because it as just a field with lots of cows.

When we got to the place where we were staying for the night we began to get changed and sort ourselves out. After that we set up where we were going to sleep, not in tents just under a tarp.

When we had done that we had a barbecue, whilst the adults were talking and cooking, us kids went to take the dog for a walk. There was a river close to us and when me and Cara were walking back to the tarp we both fell in because we didn't know it was there!

Just before we went to bed at about midnight, we all had to go for a wash and to the toilet. It was really funny because there were huge spiders in the toilet and Jess started screaming.

During the night it was a bit cold but not too bad. My Mum said she didn't sleep at all but I think she did really! In the morning we woke up and saw loads of rabbits all around and it was cool. All the cows started going in the barn to be milked and they were so noisy! Then we got all our kit on and started walking back to the canoes. After that we set off paddling down the river.

Day two was a bit of a blur for me, I was exhausted from paddling and lack of sleep. I remember lots of singing, some very bad jokes and lots of chocolate. I was really lucky because I got to sit at the front of my friend's boat and had a rest.

My brother found a huge rock and decided it would be fun to jump off so... that's what he did (It was about 15 foot). He got soaked and very cold but he was happy (silly boy!).

As it was nearly dinner time we stopped and had some lunch. We were all very tired, well we had been canoeing for nearly two days. Luckily the sun was out so it was good because we could just sit and relax for a bit. After dinner we were off again.

Our journey down the river Wye was coming to an end. We had a fantastic time, saw beautiful scenery and had the most fun ever.

I would like to thank Glen from In2gr8 for driving us all the way there and back and for bringing lovely Cara for me to play with (I'm not scared of dogs anymore!) and to Gareth for helping us organise the trip. Also, big thanks to the team who made it fun: Beth, Dan, Tim, In2gr8 Lady, Jess. Lastly, thanks to mum and Ange for organising another really good event for us.

**KATIE ROSE MCCULLAGH.**  
**NORTHERN STAR CC**



# Youth – National & Regional



## TEAM NORTH

### Slalom at the Pool

On March 8th, many kayakers attended Water World swimming pool in Prudhoe to take part in the annual slalom. The turn-out from all the clubs was great and everyone enjoyed themselves on the course.

The highlights of the course included the first seal dive from the one metre drop at the side of the pool, which started the stopwatch. From the pool where the slide ended flows a waterfall over the edge and in which a whistle hung inside. Only after successfully blowing the whistle, could you move to the next gate.

Just before the third last gate (a limbo), was an Eskimo roll gate, which, as the name suggests, meant you had to perform a roll. Help was there for those who could not roll alone, otherwise you stormed ahead!

Finally, there was the basketball hoop. This caused the most problems among the competitors, with only three attempts at scoring. A ball was thrown to you by the volunteer, who would also return the ball if you missed and then it was up to you to stop your time by landing the ball in the hoop.



We enjoyed taking part in the slalom and can't wait for next year's event and we both wish to thank Ray and all those working with him for organising this great event.  
**ZOE ALLIN AND CAITLIN BRADBURY**

## Paddlesport news

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

### May

#### Happy birthday Paddlepower

This new scheme is now one year-old and is most defiantly growing fast!

**Paddlepower activity cards** – The all new and improved Paddlepower activity cards are now available to order. They comprise of 14 games to help coaches in further development of techniques within a fun setting. They are laminated so they are ideal for taking out on the water and will easily fit into a buoyancy aid pocket. Each game includes some hints and advice on the following:

- Aim of the activity
- How to play
- Organisation
- Equipment
- Safety
- Progressions
- Technical aim
- Hot tips for coaches

### June

**Paddlepower coach's manual** - We have been working very hard to update the Paddlepower coach's manual. This updated resource is due to be available in a colourful booklet format. The Paddlepower coach's manual is designed for any coach wishing to run the new BCU Paddlepower Scheme and is essential to help get the most out of the scheme. We are at the final design stage, so fingers crossed!

### July

**Paddlepower posters** – Just what you need to promote Paddlepower, a poster!

We have worked through the concept stage of design and are poised to sign off the final design. The Paddlepower poster will help to raise awareness of the scheme and will be available in two sizes A2 and A4.

We are currently reviewing the Paddlepower prices, details of any changes will be announced in the August edition of Canoe Focus. The good news is that by August all of the Paddlepower resources will be available to purchase via the BCU web site Eshop.

## Falmouth Marine School run another winner!

**The 2008 South West Students Surf Kayaking Championships, with 27 entrants representing Falmouth Marine School, Duchy College and Truro College. There were people of all abilities; from those who have only kayaked a few times to some hardened river boaters and even a couple of surfers.**

All competitors were split into six heats of four surfers to compete against students from the other colleges. The plan was to run three rounds with everyone surfing against different people in each round but after two rounds and time running out the decision was taken to scrap the third round

and go straight to the semi-finals and finals.

Throughout the day the surf was 1.5 foot gentle rollers allowing everyone to have a go at the green waves and ride some shoulders to the beach. There were some fine performances from the colleges and great enthusiasm from all the students. The heats ran smoothly starting with 15 minute heats and then running ten minute heats until the closely fought final, which returned to a 15 minute heat to allow everyone a fair chance of catching their share of waves.

The semi-finals were drawn from those who had the best two performances in the two rounds.

Truro college had a large turn out and lots of great performances, demonstrating confidence and skill, they dominated the semi-finals and finals. Falmouth Marine School and Duchy College also worked hard, but as the day drew on and the cold set in, some competitors had to retire early, opening up the final heats.

Overall the day was a great success with fun surfing and it was good to see so many young surf kayakers demonstrating good surfing etiquette even in a competitive environment.

A big thank you to the judges: Richard Uren, Drew Pilley, Joe Simms and Simon Clark.



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FAO Liz Maybury: Kayaks North West, Marina Village, Preston Brook, Runcorn. WA7 3DW.

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## Reading Canoe Club

A club to be proud of

Ten years ago in May 1998, Reading Canoe Club opened the new lottery funded premises for the very first time.

The cost of the new facility was £453k of which £397K was supplied by lottery funding, with the balance made up from fund raising and personal pledges. Prime objectives were to promote the sport in a professional manner, to attract youngsters to the sport and to provide a great quality resource for the community.

Reading Canoe Club (CC) has a very strong junior section many of which have not only represented Great Britain internationally but have also come home with medals. The club hopes that today's juniors will be canoeists for life

and will play their part in the future of the club and the sport as a whole, alongside established senior paddlers and coaches.

The new clubhouse enabled the club to develop and grow into a true 'club for all'. Reading CC has a strong racing ethic and is keen to help their juniors to excel, where every age group is encouraged to paddle at the best level they can.

With Reading CC's dedicated and growing coaching team, they provide excellent quality training at all ages and levels from novice to elite, across their main focus disciplines of sprint,



The new clubhouse enabled the club to develop and grow into a true 'club for all'.



# Back in time

## Looking back...

More than fifty years ago, members of a model aircraft club and a small kayak club (with wooden and canvas kayaks) based on the banks of the River Thames at Reading, decided to join together and use their construction skills with fibre glass – a relatively new modelling material which had become available to build canoes. As canvas boats became more popular than miniature planes, a new dawn broke as Reading Kayak Club was formed.

This was the birth of a club, which would produce a chain of international and Olympic paddlers and in due course become the progressive and competitive Reading Canoe Club of today.

The buildings that have sheltered Reading's canoeists over the years range from an old launch called 'Big Toot' which was beached on the bank, to a rusty caravan and later a second hand wooden construction. By 1992, the buildings were fast rotting away and the club was under threat of losing the land lease in 2000. In order to secure the continued existence and progress of the club, Chairman Tamsin Phipps led the club in a bold plan to redevelop the site and build a brand new high quality clubhouse to be proud of.

Over the years the club has changed both its name and its club colours. Starting as Reading Kayak Club in the 1950's, it changed its name in the 1970's to Reading and Leighton Park Canoe Club when a strong link was forged with Leighton Park School and their PE Master (and well known canoeist) Bernard Perrett. The club colours at the time were a yellow vest with a diagonal navy blue stripe on it. As the new clubhouse was opening Bernard was retiring from his teaching post and the link with school was lost, so the club became Reading Canoe Club with the distinctive blue and white colour vest it has today. ●

[www.reading-canoe.org.uk/](http://www.reading-canoe.org.uk/)

marathon and slalom. The club also welcome and value those who paddle purely for pleasure and recreation.

Working with schools and serving their local community, Reading CC aims to encourage everyone to find their place on the water.



Bigtoot



The river front



The old boat sheds

## Grandtully Slalom



# Clubs and regional news

## CLUB FORUMS

Canoe England staff descended on four regions this Spring to provide information, updates and a networking opportunity for club members and volunteers to attend. An outstanding number of volunteers attended the North West (March 15th), London & South East (March 29th), South (March 30th) and East (April 13th) club forums.

Despite the initial dubious feeling from some volunteers, club members went away feeling informed and more positive about the organisation. As one volunteer said at the North West forum: "I was expecting to leave by lunchtime – I didn't think it would be any good. But I'm still here at 4 o'clock because it was so informative!"

BCU and Canoe England directors and officers were out in force to ensure clubs received the best day possible – Director of Operations, Robert Deacon, could have talked all day with his presentation on insurance! As well as listening to updates, it also provided BCU and Canoe England officers the opportunity to listen to the thoughts of those in the clubs and act on what was being said from the people who count – the volunteers. Indeed, as a direct result from talking to the club members themselves, Canoe England insurance cover was increased following discussions at the North West forum.

A similar programme will be followed for the remaining regions which will include a combination of updates and discussions – new coaching and performance awards; volunteers; insurance; club accreditation; access; safeguarding; equality plus an open forum. New dates for the Autumn have now been scheduled for the remaining regions:

**North East:** Saturday October 11th  
**Yorkshire:** Sunday October 12th, Bradford & Bingley CC  
**East Midlands:** 16th November  
**West Midlands:** 9th November, Upton Warren  
**South West:** Saturday October 4th, Exeter

Places are limited to four members per club and workshops will be allocated on a first come first serve basis. Make sure your club doesn't miss out and sign up now!

Up to date information, including confirmed venues, is available on the volunteer section of the Canoe England web site: [www.canoe-england.org.uk](http://www.canoe-england.org.uk). Alternatively contact us direct, email: [volunteers@bcu.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@bcu.org.uk) or telephone 0845 370 9530.

Many thanks to all the clubs and volunteers who attended the Spring Club Forums. A special thanks goes to Peninsula Canoe Club, Bury St Edmunds Leisure Centre, Wey Kayak Club and Newbury Waterside Centre for helping us host the forums.

## BCU Club of the Year Awards 2008

**Sponsored by Cotswold Outdoor**  
BCU/Canoe England are proud to announce the winning clubs for this year's prestigious title of BCU Club of the Year 2008:

### BCU Club of the Year 2008: Sheffield Canoe Club

Sheffield CC was founded on 15th June 1966 and its aim has always been to promote all aspects of canoeing and kayaking. Over the last two years, the club's committee have put together a modern programme to move forward in kayaking.

Having achieved BCU Top Community Club in March 2005, they are one of only seven clubs in the Yorkshire region that have been awarded with this accreditation. Sheffield CC has always been welcoming to new members of all levels and all ages and excel in their work within the community. Their work with local community groups and organisations has been outstanding and the diligence and commitment of its volunteers have enabled the club to develop school club links from the local area to ensure the long term development of the club.

The BCU/Canoe England recognise the hard effort of the volunteers and club members who have dedicated their time to the successful development of this club and were awarded £150 in Cotswold Vouchers.

### Runner up: Birmingham Canoe Club

Birmingham CC was established over 50 years ago and is a very active club supported by dedicated members.

The club organises regular trips to various different venues in the UK and Europe to assist in the development of the paddlers while working hard to ensure they have a large number of coaches on hand to welcome all levels of ability and ages into the club environment.

Although Birmingham CC has not achieved Clubmark yet, the club are working hard towards achieving the accreditation with club members embracing the new developments. The BCU/Canoe England recognise that Birmingham CC have come a long way in terms of development and were recognised for their commitment and progress with £100 of Cotswold Vouchers.

### Runner up: Tandridge Canoe Polo

Tandridge CC was the first BCU club to achieve Clubmark and Top Community Club and have worked hard within the community to have strong links with uniformed groups and schools. The club have welcomed opportunities to develop their club and have embraced change to ensure their club provides the best opportunities for young people, coaches and volunteers to develop and progress.

The BCU recognises the innovative ways the club have provided opportunities for young people – including a regional network structure to provide local events for young people – and the club were rewarded with £100 of Cotswold Vouchers.

Presentations will be made to all three clubs in June at a special presentation. All three clubs were subsequently nominated for the CCPR's (Central Council of Physical Recreation) Sports Club of the Year (SCOTY) Awards 2008 in association with the Foundation for Sports and the Arts and the chance to win up to £6,000.

## Suffolk in the Spring

**Thirty-eight coaches of all levels from across the region attended the Suffolk Coach Update held at Waveney Valley CC, Bungay, on 15th March. Stuart Briggs gave the keynote presentation and there was lots of active questioning through the presentation by the assembled coaches. The questions were very constructive and cleared a lot of**

**misconceptions that some of the coaches had.**

The morning workshops were 3 Star Kayak Skills (Andy Ing); Paddlepower presentation (Stuart Briggs); Cross Stream Challenge (Jeff Toser).

The afternoon workshops were 3 Star Canoe Skills (Stuart Briggs); Fundamental Paddlesport Skills (Andy Ing); Cross Stream Challenge (Jeff Toser). During the briefing, we were visited by an inquisitive Otter, which strolled along the far bank, with total indifference to the brightly coloured and noisy coaches across the river.

The update was closed by issuing the Cross Stream booklets, thanking Gavin Plant for constant tea making, supplying boats and equipment where needed and finally wishing the candidates a safe journey home.

Feedback from the attending coaches included;

*"Thanks for today, Open stuff was good – maybe going for a paddle on Sunday – Marty not looking forward to me testing out all the new ideas on her!"*

*"Thank you very much for the coach update session on Saturday. I learnt lots and enjoyed it so a really worthwhile day – thanks."*

Canoe England staff would like to thank Waveney Valley CC for their hospitality and the use of their club house and equipment. Thanks to Andy Ing for assisting on the day, and to Gavin Plant for all the work he did on the day and still finding time to take the photographs.

The Norfolk Coach Update, 21st June, at the time of writing has limited vacancies, so apply as soon as possible if you need to revalidate your coaching qualifications.

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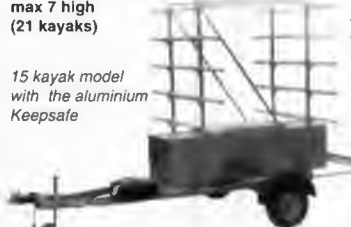
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# Clubs and regional news

## New Paddlesport Club founded from links with local schools

A school club link success story that ensures continued participation from local schools.

### How did this all start?

James Ellison, the Partnership Development Officer for Morpeth and Ponteland Partnership, approached Canoe England's PESSCL Development Officer at the School and Sports Partnership Conference in Telford. James asked whether any clubs were eager to form a school club link with his partnership and whether any kayaks were available as a starting point. James had two swimming pools available in Morpeth and Ponteland that he could use but needed a coach and equipment.

James was put in touch with George McCready, then Head of Youth Services, for Prudhoe, Ponteland and Morpeth. Eight kayaks and equipment belonging to the youth services were put to good use. George approached Hayley Johnston, a youth development worker employed at King Edward V1 school, who is also a BCU Trainee Level 3 Kayak coaching member for Coquet Canoe Club.

The programme of courses for young participants soon developed into an enthusiastic group of people local to the area wanting more. This was realised by Castle Morpeth Borough Council Sport and Physical Activity Alliance (SPAA) Sports Development.

Hayley was successful in attracting young volunteers from the King Edward V1 High School who were also keen canoeists and members of Coquet CC to help coach the sessions.

These students are now starting a Step into Sport programme in community volunteering.



## Sheffield CC's new web site

Sheffield Canoe Club now has a newly re-designed web site. The club felt they needed to make the best use of this form of media and have now completely redesigned it from the ground up where the content changes on a daily basis to make it a dynamic part of their club.

See: [www.sheffieldcanooclub.co.uk](http://www.sheffieldcanooclub.co.uk)

# Basingstoke and Deane CC earns Top Club status

**Basingstoke and Deane CC (BDCC) has just achieved Sport England ClubMark accreditation and Canoe England Top Community Club Status.**

Sport England has developed the 'ClubMark' scheme to allow sports clubs to show that they are well managed and child friendly. It is not granted directly but is tied to equivalent schemes run by the national governing bodies for each sport: for canoeing the Canoe England 'Top Club' scheme. Top Club requires the club to meet criteria in four categories: activities; coaching; duty of care/ ethics and club management. By gaining this accreditation sports clubs can demonstrate to parents that they meet national standards in key areas such as coaching and child protection.



BADCC decided that it could achieve Top Club by going down the community club route. Peter Mansell, the Club's Youth Officer said, "This was a great opportunity to work more closely with Canoe

*England to strengthen the management of the Club and to improve the quality of coaching we can offer".* The Club now runs an introductory programme for children every year based on the highly effective Canoe England PaddlePower programme.

Achieving Top Club status has not fundamentally changed

BADCC, which remains a family orientated recreational club. However, it has helped to run the club more effectively and to show that the club meets national standards in key areas such as safety, coaching and child protection.

For more information on the BADCC please visit [www.badpaddlers.org](http://www.badpaddlers.org)

# Bradford and Bingley CC unveil new facilities

**Bradford and Bingley Canoe Club (BBCC) has completed its new canoe storage facility, marked by the official launch on Thursday in March.**

The new facilities, which sit inside the grounds of the Bradford and Bingley Sports Club, were built using an award of £160,000 it received from the Sport England Community Club Development Programme (CCDP).

The club, which has already produced some of the best white water slalom canoeists in the UK, is well on the way to achieving its aim to become a leading canoe and kayak club within the region. Having represented Bradford in



Wendy Robinson, BBCC Chairman said: "These new facilities have provided a real boost for canoeing and kayaking in Bradford and Bingley and the whole of the Yorkshire region."

*"Members of the Club have to be congratulated for their hard work in making the project a success, and the support of Sport England and the BCU has*

*been invaluable in helping to turn our plans into reality."*

slalom and white water competition since the late sixties, turning out competitors of international standard, the club has found several of its members ranking in the premier division of UK Canoe Slalom.

The Sport England CCDP grant, which has been awarded to the BBCC through the BCU, will enable the club to grow, to operate more efficiently, and to consolidate its position as one of the Yorkshire region's top clubs.

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# Clubs and regional news

## Olympic training canoe club to be established at Manvers

The BCU announced that it will establish an Olympic training canoe club on Manvers 50-acre lake that lies at the centre of Rotherham's ambitious Waterfront regeneration scheme.

The developer TCN UK (formerly Express Park Developments) behind the £130 million 285-acre mixed use Waterfront, will provide a boathouse for the club, which will operate flat water canoeing to Olympic standard, sailing, dragon boating, model boating as well as coarse angling. TCN's contribution is part of a £4 million commitment the company has made to developing the Waterfront's leisure facilities, which also include a golf course, driving range and golf club house.

Sport England is also providing £106,000 worth of funding for the canoe club project. It is anticipated that the boathouse will be complete by the Autumn of this year, with the canoe club starting activities on the lake from April 21st.

Chris Hawkesworth, Planning and Facilities Manager of Canoe England comments, "We are very pleased with this development; it gives Canoe England a high profile, high specification base in South Yorkshire, an area that has a lot of paddling potential. We have negotiated a long exclusive lease of Manvers Lake. We have formed a community club open to all people that have an interest in using the lake and the water environment for non-powered recreation and competition.

"The Manvers Lake is a racing facility which will act as a pathway to Olympic flat water racing and Marathon canoeing, both of which can be hosted at Rother Valley Country Park.

"Though set up by canoeing's national governing body, 'Manvers Waterfront Canoe Club' already has an angling section and we are looking forward to forming other sections for other interests such as diving, sailing and model boating as demand increases.

"In short, the lake is now open for business, with a full programme of events planned for 2009 when the land facilities are full open".

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

### People and clubs

In the last round of volunteer nominations, I am delighted to report that Yorkshire has done very well. Congratulations to Esther Mathews for being nominated as 'Outstanding Lady Coach of the Year', to Sheffield CC for being 'Club of the Year' and I also got a mention, which I can tell you was very nice, thank you. As nice as it is to be nominated (let alone win), even more thanks must go to those who took the time to submit the nominations. Congratulations also to Pennine CC for their recent polo successes and to all the teams for a splendid season. Pennine CC will shortly have improved club facilities at Mirfield

[www.penninecanoe.ipox.com](http://www.penninecanoe.ipox.com)

Green Star CC are again hosting their weekends of paddfest events for all who wish to improve and these are 21/22 June and 13/14 Sept and polo on 9/10 Aug and 11/12 Oct. Full details from Esther on 01302 535941 or [esther.mathews@btinternet.com](mailto:esther.mathews@btinternet.com).

Recognising that access to a competitive Junior sized Slalom kayak wasn't easy (or cheap) the Region have taken the decision to buy three 'Energisers' as a regional asset and available for you to use.

### New kids on the block

Please welcome new Yorkshire canoe club 'Manvers Waterfront CC' (MWCC) who held their first get-together on the 21st April. The 50 that attended have made a new friend in the form of the Sandy Gate Hotel, who made us very welcome and obviously know how to treat a bunch of dripping customers. The work is underway and the new clubhouse will be finished this year. As we have lake access, but no actual premises or boat store, the initial scheme is that members (details at [manvers@yorcie.org.uk](mailto:manvers@yorcie.org.uk)) are paying £10 and using their own kit use the lake. Full details will be available later in the year.

### Washburn

The purchase of the Wood Yard at its associated buildings, were also completed in April. This now allows the Washburn committee to get on with its long term plans to develop the site. Improvements in the river water features will be installed in Aug/Sept with no disruption to the schedule of release dates. Part of this

expansion includes the use of the Thruscross reservoir and Gareth is kicking this off on 29th June with fun and games for all classes of boat. Details are available from Gareth at [gareth@bcu.org.uk](mailto:gareth@bcu.org.uk) and the fun begins at 11am. Other forthcoming release dates are June 7/8th, 18th, 22nd and then the Yorkshire Champs on July 5/6th. Then another Thruscross date is on the cruise evening of July 23rd July. Check the YORCIE info line on 0845 833 8654 before you travel.

### WEBwise

Following my appeal in the last edition, 'Thank you' we now have some volunteers to keep the web fresh. These volunteers will form the region's web team and this has the aim of 'regionalising' the region. So area specific info can be kept fresh. For this to really take off just a few more volunteer 'websters' would be ideal. See [www.yorcie.org.uk](http://www.yorcie.org.uk)

### Coaching news

Thanks to RCO, Ian Scott, who is standing down after eight years. Ian has a new business and was finding it hard to do justice to both. The changes brought in with UKCC means maintaining what you are familiar with, is a long way short of learning a whole new scheme. Ian took the RCOs job on when we had nothing like the support team we have now. By the time you read this the region's 'validated' coaches will have had a postal ballot and selected Ian's successor.

Thank you also to all the coaches who helped run yet another wonderful CoachFest at Aldwark. The breakdown was: 106 participating coach candidates, who took part in one or more of 13 different courses delivered by 21 of the region's volunteer coaches and supported by our five headquarters staff of 'Team North'. These were fed and watered by a volunteer support catering team and pulled together by the organising team of Janet and Paul Cartwright.

An interesting statistic of the weekend was that although this all began as a coach revalidation day, only 25 of the 106 were actually there to revalidate. You'll remember that in the last Yorcie I reported that of the 1,000 coaches in Yorkshire only 400 have revalidated, (that's 425 now), so it's obvious that while some coaches

don't want to revalidate, there are a lot of coaches who want to take part in regional 'events'. As a result, the team are thinking of new events for next year's weekend.

The next scheduled revalidation and coach get-together day is Sept 28th at Pugneys. The next coaches evening get-together is also on Sept 28th. However this is no longer at Fearnville (due to the loss of the bar) and will be held at a venue to be advised somewhere nearby and timed to follow the day event. Details are available from our regional coaching secretary Janet Cartwright and minutes of the last meeting and an agenda for the next can be obtained at [paul@pcartwright.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:paul@pcartwright.freeserve.co.uk) or tel. 01484 603126.

### Nearly finally

Thanks to Yorkshire paddlers now living in Northumberland, I have been advised that some of their rivers with webcams. You can access these to help you decide if a river is high enough to run. Have a look at [www.hexham-tynebridge.com](http://www.hexham-tynebridge.com) [www.fishbritain.co.uk/Tyne/RiverLev\\_els.asp?dom=Tyne](http://www.fishbritain.co.uk/Tyne/RiverLev_els.asp?dom=Tyne) and also over in Cumbria [www.rianchasers.com](http://www.rianchasers.com) you will find webcams for the Greta, Leven and Kent. Are there any for Yorkshire's waters? If so let me know and we'll build up a library.

### And finally

There is a vacant place at the regional meetings for your club. We have reported here just some of the successes and achievements made by the team in the last two months. There is plenty more we can do, but at the same time if we don't have you and your ideas, or your venue, it may well be more of the same. Remember the McNamara principle which is, 'that which we can't see doesn't exist'. If you'd like to know more, about the affairs of the region, please contact our regional secretary Jon on [jdakeyne@aol.com](mailto:jdakeyne@aol.com) 0113 2250984. The date of the next RDT meeting which is in Leeds is Monday 23rd June at 6.30. And don't forget the ACM on Tuesday 28th October at the cricket club in Ossett at 7.30.

Please keep your news coming in. Thank you. Dick. [dickconstable@canoists.co.uk](mailto:dickconstable@canoists.co.uk)



## Devon's first

Port of Plymouth Canoe Club, based at the Mount Batten Centre, has become the first club in Devon and only the fifth in the South West to gain Sport England's Club Mark and the BCU's Top Club awards.

These show that the club has achieved the highest standards and is committed to encouraging children into the sport.

Local British Olympic diving star Tom Daley was invited to give the award to the club's leader, Tony Blackmore.

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# BCU PHOTOGRAPH C



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Paul Thwaites

**MARCH YOUTH WINNER**

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**APRIL ADULT WINNER**

David Morton

**APRIL YOUTH WINNER**

Nathan O'Callaghan

**For your chance of winning  
get clicking now!**

**April adult winner**

David Morton

**March adult winner**

Paul Thwaites





# COMPETITION

**COTSWOLD**  
outdoor | action | travel

We receive lots of photos of canoeing and competitors, but if you have any photos of the volunteers who often work behind the scenes, contributing their time and commitment to the sport, we would love to see your photos. Please send them in.

## HOW TO ENTER

Send your photos in jpeg format via email to [chloe.nelson-lawrie@bcu.org.uk](mailto: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)
- when it was taken (time of the year)

## 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](mailto: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.



**April youth winner**  
Nathan O'Callaghan

**March adult**  
Pete Sykes





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This innovative service is planned to be opened by the Middle of 2008 in the Holbeach area and will offer a mobile respite service and an exciting residential social work service for the young people in our care.

Active8, whilst currently based in Anglesey operates throughout the UK. We provide individually tailored outdoor adventure activities, led by highly qualified staff. This new service planned to be named Aqua8 will incorporate tailored packages for young people giving them the experience of living between our Registered House and our own specially adapted narrow boats.

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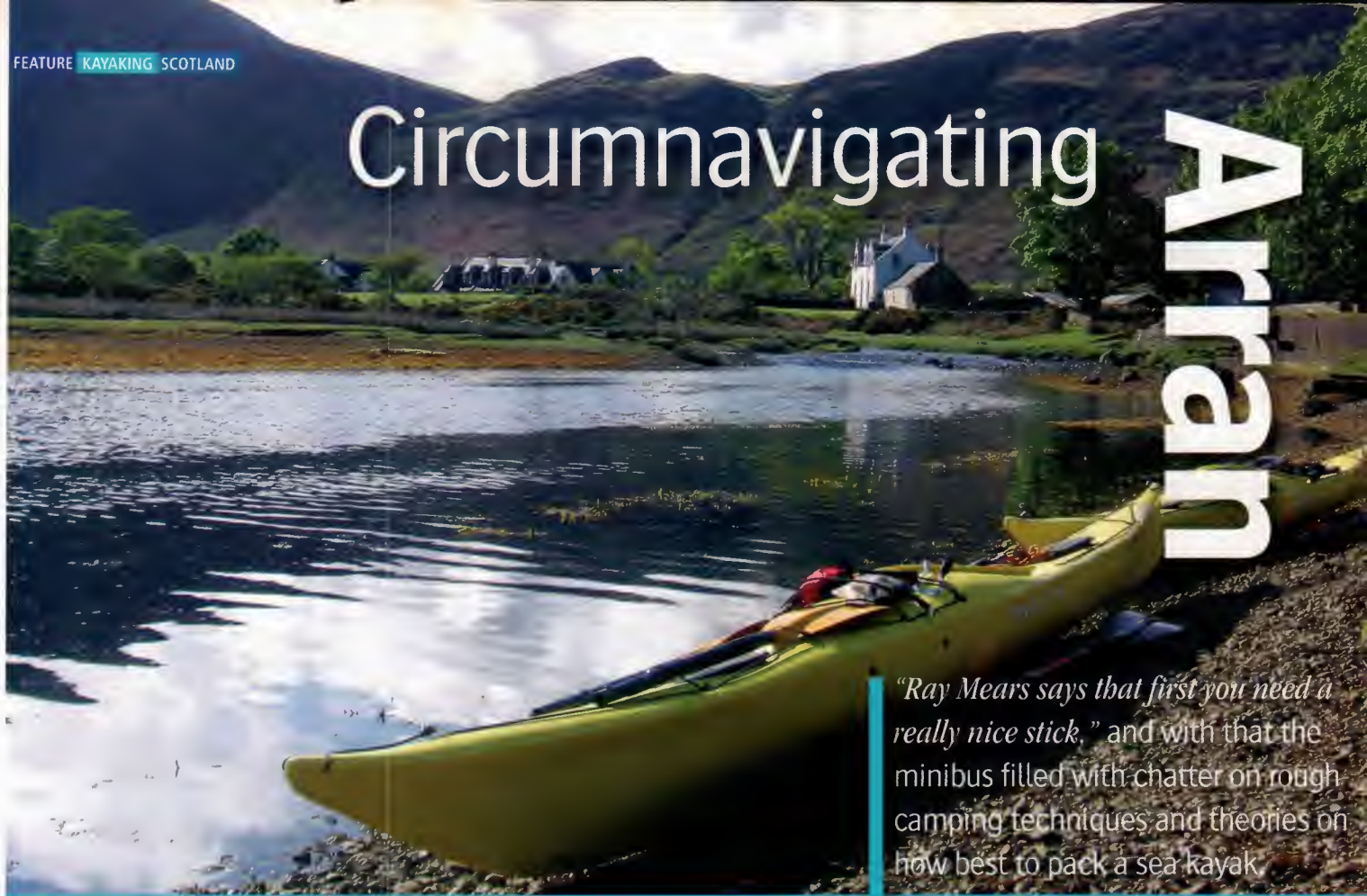
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# Circumnavigating Arran



*“Ray Mears says that first you need a really nice stick,” and with that the minibus filled with chatter on rough camping techniques and theories on how best to pack a sea kayak*

**Eight Outdoor Education students travelled from South Devon on their way to catch the Ardrossan Ferry to Brodick, with the hope of circumnavigating the Isle of Arran. With only three days to paddle the 90kms, the time schedule was tight. A comfy night at the Lochranza Youth Hostel allowed for hot, tasty food and table space for laying out charts, maps and weather forecasts. Besides the aim of paddling around the island, the students were learning the rudiments of expedition organisation. From budgets to transport, equipment to route planning, they were involved with the decision making, including the one to paddle anti-clockwise around the Isle.**

Tuesday morning welcomed us with dry weather and a tide high enough to facilitate a launch across the road from the Youth Hostel. As the group set out, trims were checked and everyone settled into the journey. Sea kayaking was new to all bar one of the students, but a steady rhythm was soon established and good headway made. The views across Kilbrannan Sound to the Kintyre coast were spectacular and after an early lunch break the following breeze was used to push us down to Drumadoon Point and a well-earned rest near Blackwaterfoot. The good weather held and it was agreed to push-on and after two hours of cruising above lush kelp forests a suitable camping area was located. Kit was moved quickly up the beach and before long tea was being supped as pasta boiled and students shared stories of numb backsides and wearied limbs.

### Lack of wind and a calm sea

West coast Scotland is well known for changing weather and by Wednesday morning the tents had sustained several hours of steady rain. Spirits were not dampened though as we recognised that the lack of wind and a calm sea would allow fast progress. Sandy beach changed to gently sloping cliffs punctuated by caves, waterfalls and large areas of wild flowers. After a break at Port Dearg, opposite the island of Pladda, the group moved towards Holy Island, cuddled in the curve of Lamash Bay. Despite

the rain its hills could clearly be seen rising impressively from sea level. These loomed large over us as we hugged Holy Island’s west coast on our way north to Brodick and the opportunity to hit the chippy! It was still only mid-afternoon and with an average speed of over 5kph the group realised it could reach a great camping spot near North Sannox. Besides offering soft, flat grass for tent pitching and views to the Isle of Bute, the contours suggested a rugged backdrop. We were not disappointed.

After a great night’s sleep I woke early. Is there anything to beat that first sip of morning tea whilst looking out over the sea from the comfort of your warm sleeping bag? No need to hurry this morning as the group had agreed that with only 12km to go a lie-in could be indulged. At 10.30am we moved easily along the coast. A lengthy stop at Laggan Cottage included time for taking photographs to send to expedition sponsors and to swap kayaks for the final leg to Lochranza. The later start and long stops almost proved our undoing as the wind started to build and the sea state with it. As less experienced paddlers battled against the elements, landfall was sought so that the skills and boats could be re-matched. The wind continued to strengthen and wave height increased, with heads down it was difficult to appreciate the views. Eventually the entrance to Lochranza appeared, where we could get shelter and look forward to the castle and youth hostel.

### Mugs of tea and slabs of cake

Relief turned to bravado as personal anecdotes of the difficulties of the last hour were shared. Large mugs of tea and slabs of cake sustained the packing of bags and trailer before exhausted paddlers crawled to the comfort of hot showers and dry clothes. Expeditions, even short ones like ours, deserve to finish with a celebration. The Lochranza Hotel provided a suitable venue, with fabulous food, a friendly service and drinks in plentiful supply.

All-in-all the expedition was a success; with all eight students completing the circumnavigation of the Isle



The team



of Arran. In so doing they had experienced the logistics behind moving paddlers, equipment and other resources, necessary to achieve going from Devon to Arran.

The Isle of Arran is a wonderful venue for sea kayaking. With its beautiful coastline and access to sheltered areas, no matter what the wind direction, it is well worth a visit.

Our thanks go to Tom at Totnes Kayaks and Neil at Paignton Community and Sports College for providing sea kayaks and to the Ixex Canoe Club for ancillary equipment. ●

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