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Above: President of the BCU, Albert Woods, opens the BCU's 75th anniversary dinner.

Hello and welcome to the December Canoe Focus



As the year comes to an end, we can look back on another successful 12 months for our sport.

We began the year by celebrating Paracanoeing's inclusion in the 2016 Paralympics and our jubilation continued through to April, as we also heard we had won our bid to host the 2015 ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships, to be held in London.

As the summer approached though we turned our attentions to 2011, as we saw the canoe slalom team selection take place at the newly-built Olympic Lee Valley White Water Centre. It went on to be a hugely successful season for GB Canoeing overall, as we won a host of medals and secured three World Championship titles, including our first ever Paracanoe World Champion, and another two European Championship titles.

Away from competition, Canoe England ran the most successful National Go Canoeing Week to date, which saw record numbers of people take to the water and we recognised some of the many wonderful volunteers within our sport, at the Canoe England Volunteer and Recognition Awards in November.

The year has also seen an extra special celebration, in the form of the BCU's 75th anniversary. It was great to see so many familiar faces at the anniversary dinner, held last month and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who joined us in Nottingham for a wonderful evening.

Congratulations to both David Gent and Duncan Winning, who each received their much deserved Vice Presidency awards during the night too.

As we prepare for 2012 then, we look forward to another great year for canoeing, including the excitement of the London Olympic Games and everything that comes with being able to showcase our sport to such a huge audience.

Until then though, I'd like to wish you a merry Christmas and a happy new year.

Paul Owen, BCU Chief Executive

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In brief

Watermark Experiences

Former World Freestyle Champion Deb Pinniger and internationally renowned whitewater kayaker Matt Tidy have launched their new Community Interest Company (CIC): Watermark Experiences. Deb and Matt have teamed up to create unique and challenging kayak adventures for young people aged 12 to 23.

Watermark Experiences CIC is operated on a not for profit basis and is focused on helping young people experience real life adventures and learn the skills needed to succeed in whatever career they choose. Watermark Experiences holds a full AALA license and currently running adventures to India, Morocco, Norway, The Alps, Zambia and also home grown adventures on Dartmoor and the mountains of Wales and Scotland.

Visit www.watermarkexperiences.com



40 years of Abernethy

The Abernethy group of Outdoor Adventure Centres celebrates its 40th anniversary this year. Abernethy has a long history of paddlesport instruction, offering kayaking, open canoeing and sea kayaking to its guests. Along with the anniversary, Lorimer Gray, Chief Executive is retiring after 36 years of working for Abernethy. Phil Simpson who is based at Abernethy Ardeonaig will succeed him. www.abernethy.org.uk

Volunteers needed

The BCU, in conjunction with Canoe Wales, are hosting the Cardiff World Cup Race on 8-10th June 2012. They need a team of dedicated volunteers to make this a World Cup to remember! If you are available, ideally from Thursday 7th, and would like to be part of this team, please e-mail anne.hounslow@btinternet.com. If you have a specific area of expertise, or a particular area you would like to be involved in please let Anne know.

"Coach, you're the best!"



Do you have a favourite coach or instructor? If

so, why not nominate them in the Perkins Slade 'Coach you're the Best' competition? And they could win £1000 of sports equipment vouchers! Find out more at: www.perkins-slade.com/insurance-blog/coach-you-are-the-best/

Wavehopper racing just got a whole lot better

Wild Water Racing will update the Wavehopper Challenge to open the competition up to more people and clubs and make it even more exciting than ever. With immediate effect the races are open to everybody, all ages and all standards, with the addition of a senior section (18-34-years old) and a class for masters (over 35-years old), with the promise of more intervening age bands when numbers grow!

The junior age bands of under 18, 16, 14, 12, 10 and lower, will remain to encourage youngsters to take up the sport and all groups will be open to everybody. Wavehoppers will be provided at competitions, as they are now, but if you are not sure about using a Wavehopper, you will be welcome to take part in play-boats, general purpose boats and slalom boats; basically any boat shorter than a Wavehopper and does not have a rudder!

Entries cost just £5 for juniors and £8 for seniors, with the faster of two runs down the course counting. Your best three results count plus the final where points count double.

For more information visit www.wildwater.org.uk or contact your local PDO or Neal Underwood on 07951 770241 or email: nealunderwood@sky.com

The NY Spare Seat Kayak Expedition

The Spare Seat is the brainchild of two adventurers, Richard Harpham and Glenn Charles who are giving people the chance to join them for a day on their next adventure. Each day someone will join them on their kayaking challenge, getting involved and being part of the team. Part of the intrigue is who will join, what will their stories be and how will the entire story end.

The New York State 'Spare Seat' kayak expedition is an epic journey of over 500 miles from Niagara Falls, along the Erie Canal, a UNESCO world Heritage site, to Albany where the team will join the Hudson River and south to New York City and the Statue of Liberty.

This prize is courtesy of New York State, Division of Tourism, Delta Airlines and Travelbag. There are also other fantastic runners up prizes including Vango rucksacks, Paramo Clothing, Olympus Cameras and a day paddling in the UK for four with canoetrails.co.uk. The closing date is 31st March 2012. www.thespareseat.com.

Will Carus 1994-2011

On 31st July Will Carus from Tonbridge Canoe Club passed away whilst competing at the Richmond Hasler Marathon.

Will was a talented paddler and a member of the canoe club for five years, during which time he developed into a fine young athlete. Having started as a recreational paddler he was persuaded to try racing for the club's junior team in the Waterside Series and Devizes to Westminster Race in 2010. From there he developed as a sprint and marathon paddler working his way up to Division 4 and Boys B. We will never know exactly what happened on the day of Will's accident, but he was in the front group when he capsized and didn't make it to the riverbank.

Will was one of those unforgettable characters that brightened the lives of everyone he met with his infectious smile and amusing comments. Ever the optimist, even the hardest paddle was made easier by his famous motivational one-liners, as those who competed with him in the junior Devizes to Westminster in 2010 will testify. The phrase "just man-up" was one of his favourites, always delivered with a big smile, and is now a much-used catchphrase in the Tonbridge racing team.

As well as being a paddler, Will was also the junior representative on the club committee and

was due to take a Level 1 coaching course this summer. He was a great mentor for the younger paddlers who looked up to him as the fastest junior and also as a committed and dedicated paddler. However, the thing we will all remember Will for the most was his personality. He was often 10 minutes late for training even though he only lived round the corner but nobody cared. We were always just so pleased that he was there, because he was the life and soul of the changing room and there was never a dull moment when he was around. His passing has left a big hole in the canoe club that will never be filled.

Our thoughts remain with Will's family, who have been tremendously supportive of the sport and club throughout these difficult months. Tonbridge Canoe Club would like to thank all those paddlers and emergency services who helped in the search for Will on the day of his accident and for all the good wishes and lovely comments from the canoeing fraternity that his family have received.

A fund has been set up in Will's memory towards Epilepsy Action for which our 2012 DW crews will be raising funds.

Clive Neale – Tonbridge Canoe Club

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BCU recognises two outstanding athletes



Two outstanding contributors and role models to the sport of canoe polo.

The BCU has recently recognised Alan Vessey and Ginny Coyles by honouring them with the Award of Merit. As they retire from competitive international canoe polo, their lifetime achievements are fully deserving of this highly commendable award.

Alan Vessey

Alan Vessey's accomplishments in canoe polo are second to none, both domestically and for over 20 years internationally as part of the GB national team. He is a face that is recognised and respected around the world and being presented the BCU's Award of Merit reflects the appreciation of many involved in canoe polo.

Alan is a founding player of St. Albans Canoe Club, where he was coached by his father, Ron Vessey, who himself, was very influential in establishing canoe polo as we know it today. Alan has had numerous successes including six national league victories and six national championship wins. Now not playing for the club, he is chairman and coaches various teams. For Alan his heart is embedded in St. Albans Canoe Club.

Alan has dedicated much of his life to the national team, having attended 17 major championships achieving; two World golds, one European gold and medalled at a further 10 championships. Statistics that are unlikely to be exceeded by another player for a long time. He has not just played, but for many years managed the squads, taking on responsibilities on top of that of a player. Alan is now retired from playing internationally but as squad's manager is still leading the national teams to victories, including coaching the men's team this year to a European bronze medal.



Ginny Coyles

Ginny has been paddling for over 20 years and during this time she has become one of the most inspirational canoe polo players the women's game has ever seen. Ginny currently plays with Liverpool Friends of Allonby Canoe Club and has played in regional, national and international leagues all with a high level of success.

During Ginny's time as a GB senior ladies player she has played with and captained teams through highs and lows and most recently through some of the most successful times the team has ever had.

Ginny's Achievements Include:

- Four times World Champion (96, 04, 08, 2010)
- Four times European Champion (97, 01, 05, 09)
- World Games Champion (2009 and silver 2005)

Club:

- National league (women) 14 times winner (Mutineers and Liverpool FOA)
- National Championships (women) – 11 times winner (Mutineers and Liverpool FOA)
- European Club Championships – four times winner (06, 08, 09, 2011)
- World Masters Games 2009 bronze medal with Mutineers.

Throughout Ginny's player career she has been completely dedicated to training and competing at the highest standard. She has always remained motivated and determined to battle her way to the top leading by example. During the last three seasons of Ginny's international game 2008, 2009, 2010 she was able to achieve a goal that she has been aiming for many years: to retain the World's title along with the World Games and the European Championships. The journey to these successes was difficult and challenging but through determination, sacrifices and team work, Ginny was able to lead the team to some amazing victories and hang up her international paddles truly at the top of the world.

Ginny is continuing to play polo with her club teams at national and international competitions and she is also providing her experience, skills and expertise to the national squads helping to develop the teams and players. Ginny is a role model to many aspiring canoe polo players through her skills and ability but also through her passion, commitment and hard work to become one of the best players in the world.



In brief

Pushing the boat out with kayak recycling!

Have you ever wondered what you would do with your kayak when it's too old? The good news is that some of the businesses operating within the kayak manufacturing and retail sector have picked up on the benefits of reducing waste. Palm has been recycling plastic off cuts from the kayak manufacturing process to make a brand new boat: the Dagger Fiesta. Some retailers, such as Desperate Measures, offer kayak-recycling schemes where you can return your old plastic boats for recycling into new, alternative products.

The Kayak Recycling Project will be a small step towards raising the profile of waste in our sport. We have a responsibility to look after our environment and that goes as far as making sure we 'do the right thing' when it comes to managing our waste.

To learn about how your plastic kayak was made and find out how our manufacturers, retailers and councils have been dealing with waste, visit the Kayak Recycling Project at: www.bcu.org.uk/kayakrecycling

Paul Wycherley sets new Channel crossing record

Congratulations to GB sprint canoeist Paul Wycherley who kayaked across the English Channel in a new record time in October. Paul beat the record set in 2007 by his coach Ian Wynne by taking a staggering 31 minutes off Wynne's time in ideal conditions, finishing in two hours and 28 minutes. "I was just so lucky with the conditions. We chose the weekend about a year ago and it could have gone any way. Wynne, 37, helped Wycherley to break his record by relaying data and advice from a support boat during the crossing.

The Guildford paddler raised in excess of £100,000 with his expedition, to be split evenly between Great Ormond Street Hospital and The Prince's Charities.

Wycherley, who normally races over the 1000m distance in the men's K1 sprint canoeing category, is aiming to compete at next year's London Olympics said, "Rather than having a month off in October, I wanted a break from sprint canoeing but I still wanted to stay in shape, and this was a really good way of doing that while raising money for two brilliant charities.

"We've got a really big task ahead of ourselves, building up for London 2012 and going for the K1 spot. "Now it's a case of really focusing in, drawing up a plan for the rest of the year and sticking to it to make sure we're on target."

Photo competition winners

We are pleased to announce that the adult winner for September is Phil Eccles whilst Emily Donaghy won the U18 category. For October, the adult winner is Iain Linn whilst Ryan Day won the U18 category. Turn to page 50 to see all the photos.

In brief

New official equipment supplier for Paracanoeing

GB Canoeing are pleased to announce a new partnership with Health Clubs at Home, who are an official sports equipment supplier for Great Britain's Paracanoe athletes. Paracanoeing has recently achieved international success with Pat Mahoney becoming the first GB Paracanoe World Champion in the Men's V1 200m LTA race. He was joined on the podium by Daniel Hopwood, who won a Bronze medal in the Men's V1 200m TA event at the Canoe Sprint World Championships in Szeged, Hungary, in August. The future of Paracanoeing looks very positive indeed; it will, for the first time, be part of the Paralympic programme from 2016 beginning with the Games in Rio de Janeiro. Steve Harris, GB Canoeing Paracanoe Programme Manager commented, "We are delighted to be able to use first class equipment that will help enable our athletes to get the very best from their training. The Fluid UBE920 upper body machines provide excellent strength and conditioning benefits and we are proud to be working with one of Europe's largest independent fitness suppliers.

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Exploring Sri Lanka

A group of six kayakers have recently returned from a successful expedition to explore the white water in Sri Lanka. The expedition was the first to be held in August, during the heart of the monsoon. The team, led by Dave Burne, saw them search out rivers in the Southern Central mountain range and claiming numerous first descents. There was another major aim to the expedition though – to leave a lasting legacy in Sri Lanka. This was achieved with the help of Borderlands, a rafting and outdoor education company.

The highlight of the expedition for the team was paddling the Goorook Oya, a probable first descent, with Thilack, one of the Borderlands staff, the first time any of the team had completed a first descent with a kayaker from the host nation.

The team would like to thank Palm Equipment Europe, ZET Kayaks UK, Lyon Equipment and of course, Borderlands for their support. To find out how Dave, Tom, Niamh, Sean, Nick and Will got on, check out www.kayaksrilanka.co.uk.



Great start for Chiltern Canoe Club

It's incredible to think that this time last year Chiltern Canoe Club didn't exist! A year ago they were a group of paddlers who met for informal sessions at their local pool but they could see the sport growing in popularity in Hertfordshire and got together to form a club.

Creating the affiliated club took a few months: setting up the committee structure, working out the club costs and submitting an application for a local grant. They also kept parents aware of the new club developments with regular email updates.

As a group of paddlers they were aware of their limited experience with the most experienced coach amongst them being just Level 2, so linking in with other groups and tapping into their experience and knowledge was vital. Other local clubs were very supportive and in return they intend to act as a feeder club for them, encouraging children of a sufficient skill level to move on to join the other more established clubs. These symbiotic relationships have served them well, with one local club being generous enough to offer their old pool boats. Other clubs offered advice and moral support and they are planning a rota to incorporate guest coaches from these other clubs into their sessions.

By May they became a fully affiliated BCU club and the first children's sessions started a few days later. In June they were delighted to be told they were successful in their application for a Decorum Borough Council Olympic Fund grant of £5,000. Being aware that the wrong sized boats can be a turn off to beginners, the club invested in several



Above: Trying out their new boats.

kayaks of different sizes and also bought an array of equipment that allowed them to supplement courses including helmets, buoyancy aids and an open canoe.

During their first few months the club ran a taster day for local families, a white water trip and a couple of rolling sessions as well as their regular courses for children and adults.

In October, at the Hertfordshire Sports Partnership annual 'Service to Sports 2011' award ceremony, Chiltern Canoe Club was nominated in the 'Best Newcomer Club' category and walked away with the first place trophy.

With their enthusiastic pack of volunteers the club have plenty of plans in the pipeline and will build on this success in the coming months by running a program to get more children into the sport and kicking off new adult beginners classes. Keep up with their progress at www.chilterncanoeclub.org.

Tees Barrage re-opens

British Waterways, Stockton Borough Council, One North East, Canoe England, Sport England and Tees Active Leisure are pleased to announce that the Tees Barrage International White Water Centre has now re-opened to the public following extensive improvements.

GB team member and Olympic hopeful, Laura Blakeman said, "The Tees Barrage International White Water Centre is a brilliant asset for Stockton and the north east. Now we can boast a world-class training facility that will help us prepare for world-standard competition. We can also encourage international teams to base themselves at the Tees ahead of the London Olympic and Paralympic Games next summer."

Unlike other white water courses around the world, the centre is using four Archimedes Screws, to generate the flow of the water around the course. The mighty quartet of screws, each one over 13 metres long and weighing over 30 tonnes

individually, will be used to pump water around the course instead of the traditional method of using contained pumps. There will also be energy generated by water falling down the screws running in reverse during low tide which in turn powers a generator creating electricity to sell to the grid and fund the pumping operation. This system means that the centre is the only sustainable pumped canoe course in the UK and the world to exploit tidal fluctuations for power generation and course operation.

Other key improvements to the course include an upgraded deeper main channel, a new short course – one of the steepest in the UK, installation of a Rapidbloc system which allows paddlers to shape the waves and flows of the water and a new conveyor belt system. The centre has been designated a pre-Olympic 2012 training camp and can cater for both Olympic athletes and novice canoeists, or casual visitors interested in white water rafting.

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FOLDING KAYAKS

The Wayland folding kayaks are based on the most successful and proven designs that have been produced over the years of folding kayaks. Since the early 1930's various folding kayaks of different brands have been used successfully on expeditions around the world, many under extreme conditions and over long distances as well as by numerous special forces on military operations. These kayaks are designed to be collapsed into easily manageable rucksacks and carry bags for simple transportation and storage, and can be completely assembled within 15-20 minutes.

The Waylands shown here use wood for the framework, Hypalon for the hull and Draylon canvas for the upper deck. The kayak's skin has built-in pockets to hold bow to stern air spars, providing a dual purpose of extra buoyancy and tightening the skin over the entire frame. The broad beam plus spars produce very stable kayaks that are difficult to capsize and to sink. The huge amount of internal storage space makes these kayaks ideal for touring and camping.

There is a wide range of Wayland models to choose from, all of which are customisable according to your needs, from a plain 4.5m single seater to a large 7m 4-5 multi-seater full expedition model complete with various furnishings on the deck - all models come with standard fittings to accommodate sail rigs. The popular and versatile double seater Amazon II 630 2+1 is very manageable when used as a single seater kayak - this version comes with an extra seat position ideally situated for solo paddling. There are also models / set-ups available for young families - EG 2 adults plus 1 or 2 small children. Strongly constructed military grade kayaks, also available for civilian purchase, is a very popular choice with wild life / documentary film crews. Sea-socks, a great must-have safety item, is now available for all single seaters.

These 'boat in a bag' Wayland folding kayaks are economically priced compared to other folding kayak brands currently on the market. Wayland, with over 10 years of experience, is well known for producing high quality replacement skins for any make of folding boat. Also Wayland is NATO certified to produce & supply military grade folding kayaks, so they do know how to produce really robust and long lasting kayaks!



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European Polo Club Championships

For many of the FOA Liverpool Ladies team it was a brief interlude after returning from the Europeans in Madrid, a whole three days to wash kit, and it's off on the go again. This time it was to Helmond for the European Club Championships.

With their confidence still buzzing from the week before, they dominated the competition from the word go. The team started off playing Choszczno from Poland winning 6:1, then a Spanish team named Ciencias 4:0, Holland's Michiel de Ruyter with an 8:1 win and then the French team St. Omer beating them 2:1. The team then had to get up early on Sunday morning with their first game at 7.30am against Gottingen from Germany, winning 3-1. They then had a semi-final against a Swiss team named Thurgauer, winning 3:2, putting them through to the final against St Omer.

As predicted, the French came out fast and hard, but FAO Liverpool held it together, solid, playing as a true team to finalise the game 4:0. Throughout the competition they scored an impressive 30 goals and conceded only six!

FOA Liverpool Ladies are very proud to be currently holding all three titles: National League, National Championships and European Club Championships. As always, a huge thanks to Mike Moffit and Jimmy Mather for the support and coaching they always give to the team.

Freestyle Club Championships

The 10-11th September saw a full-on weekend of freestyle at the National Water Sports Centre, Nottingham. The grand final of the ever-popular Youth Freestyle series was held on the Saturday and the highlight of the GB Freestyle calendar, the Club Championships, was held on the Sunday.

At this year's YFS, Mr Freestyle himself, the inimitable Eric 'EJ' Jackson was on hand and on the water to give the youngsters some valuable advice. As usual all the kids got stuck into the competition and had a great time, whether it be throwing paddle spins or McNastys! For full results see: www.youthfreestyle.co.uk.

On the Sunday, the Club Champs weekend got underway. This event combined the fourth GB Freestyle league event and a club contest with points awarded to club paddlers in a downriver race, an ergo challenge and a series of novice, open and expert freestyle competitions. The clubs were going all out to win with a brand new Molan donated by Pyranha as first prize which was won by Sudbury Canoe Club. For information visit www.gbfreestylekayak.com.



Above: BoaterX start.

Rainforest rafting

R6 World White Water Rafting Championships



Above: The GB teams at the opening ceremony.

October saw the senior men and women's raft teams heading out to Costa Rica to participate in the R6 World White Water Rafting Championships hosted on the Pacuare River in the Turrialba region. It was one of the most technically difficult and physically demanding races yet, pushing both teams to show their true capability as world-class competitors.

The Pacuare was fantastic, Class IV water through stunning rainforest made for exciting challenging racing. There was a strong field of competitors, 29 teams in the men's division and 19 in the ladies, all showing their hunger for the top spot.

The first race was sprint and in traditional style the Brits matched each other's excellent places both netting silver medals, a great way to start the event. Next up was head to head, usually their best event, and a fast and furious battle between two teams down a short section. As defending World Champions, nerves were high. Unfortunately some hard fought battles saw both men and ladies teams losing their titles and gaining eighth and sixth place respectively.

After torrential rain through the night, the next day the river was much higher for the slalom. One of the most difficult slalom runs yet saw the ladies finish a respectable eighth and the men putting in a fantastic performance gaining sixth place. That night they received their starting positions for the highest point ranking race - the downriver endurance.

This year the organisers had decided to extend the race to really sort the men from the boys. A little over an hour of racing, first on class IV-V water and then finishing on class III it was going to be a real test of determination and technical skill. The ladies competed with team USA, who had lane choice.

Some great overtaking saw the British ladies scream past USA on one of the most technical rapids, taking the hero line. Both teams showed their calibre, men finishing ninth, ladies finishing fifth - one of their best downriver performances.

A great event, well done and thanks to the event organisers for managing to get some world class racing in such difficult conditions. Big thanks to the ladies sponsors: Palm Equipment, Teva and Dirty Dog eyewear. Follow them on Facebook @ GB Women's Raft Team!

GB youth raft team head to Costa Rica!

After the 24 hours of travelling the team arrived at the ranch where they were staying for the World Championships. The first day was training and time for them to have their first go on the river, which although only being Grade 3 due to it being a youth competition still impressed. Throughout the races they were surrounded by jungle with a hazy humid mist sitting over the water.

As a team they learned plenty and with some of the team new to international raft races they were very happy with their performances. The team performed the sprint well with a good start but after a misunderstanding the finish line did not appear where they had expected!

Their sixth in the slalom discipline showed the team's strength and had they not dropped low into one upstream gate after not turning enough after storming so rapidly through the most technical section they could have been further up the rankings. In both the head to head race and down river the team had to race the Costa Rican's where both made multiple overtakes but their knowledge of the river paid off in both cases as a slightly faster line gained them a few seconds breathing space.

An overall ninth for the first ever Youth R6 World Championships, which the team were pleased with, knowing the room for improvement they have. A big thanks to all the support received especially Squarerock, Science in Sport and ANRC. For more information visit <http://srrt.co.uk/news-page/>.



Above: The GB youth raft team.

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World Surf Kayak Championships

October saw the running of the Valley World Surf Kayak Championships, in North Carolina USA. This year's event was organised by the US East team on the Outer Banks, which is essentially a 120-mile long sandbank, extending out into the Atlantic. The competition was scheduled to coincide with the hurricane season, giving the competitors the best chance of getting large and consistent swells in which to compete.

The competition was due to be held at Cape Hatteras, however, Hurricane Irene decimated the area but the organisers managed to re-arrange the competition, which was a phenomenal achievement in the timescale that they had.

The new venue was at Jennetes pier, where the surfing conditions over the course of the event were fantastic, with near perfect surf, married with sunshine every day. It was the ideal setting for all the competitors to be able to show their skills.

The competition is split into two main events: the team event is where countries ride against each other and their collective positions are added together to gain a total points score, the team with the lowest score become the winning team. England entered the competition as defending champions but just missed out on retaining their title by two points to the Basque team from northern Spain.

The individual event is a straight knockout competition, meaning coming first or second in each of your heats to proceed. GB riders were setting the bar extremely high through the rounds with incredibly accurate, technical surfing, showing how high the standard of British surfing has become. By the time it came to the finals, there were UK paddlers in almost every final.

The first major success of the finals day came to Andy McClelland from N. Ireland who took the junior long boat title, this was then followed by Tamsin Green and Emma Wynter from England, who won the ladies short, and long boat respectively. Darren Bason an English paddler but currently residing in Australia took the masters long boat title and Chris Hobson of N. Ireland took the men's short boat event in a very close final against the defending champion Dave Speller.

It's amazing to see how much the sport has moved on in terms of the skills displayed by the competitors and even more satisfying to see that the riders truly pushing the boundaries are all UK-based. The England team would like to thank their sponsors, in particular Reed Chillcheater for their ongoing support.



Above: Sam Davenport. Photo by Glyn Brackenbury

Singapore's most 'amazing race'



Without taking too much away from the reality TV show of the same name, the Senior Men's K1 event at the 2011 World Championships for canoe marathon truly was, the most amazing race! The line up included five past and present World Champions, including GB's Ben Brown, in a field of 35.

Racing 30kms with seven portages over seven laps in front of one of the most spectacular backdrops was destined to be something special. From the off there were three capsizees, an illustration of the pace and ferocity that was there. After a lap the field has spread with four boats coming in, but Hank Macgregor from South Africa, with a slick efficient portage, simply paddled away from them all and was seemingly impossible for them to catch.

After portage three with four more laps to go, the distance to Macgregor was starting to lessen, then all of a sudden they caught him and the front paddlers were back as a group again. The second group caught them up after some sterling work by Ben Brown to get back in touch with the leaders. At the last portage a group of four came in only for Hank Macgregor to repeat what he did on the first portage and paddle away to cross the finish line 1000 metres on as World Champion. Certainly not textbook, or the script his coaches laid out for him!

GB's 'amazing results'

The British team's decision to go to Singapore early and acclimatise was well founded. The journey, heat and humidity combined to make the 19th World Championships one of the toughest on record. Great results from the team were achieved with three medals and two fourth places gained.

Jonny Tye in particular was a star collecting two silvers in very well contested events. His K1 performance was tactically brilliant and unlucky not to get the gold after a finish sprint tussle. His K2 performance, equally well paddled with James Webster, fortunate in that the potential silver medallists fell in with a metre to go giving Jonny

Above: Jonny Tye, first Portage, beside him is Bill Bain from AUS, the eventual winner. By Carolyn J Cooper.

and James a well-deserved silver. Tim Pendle gave a superb piece of racing to gain a bronze medal in the under 23 Men's K1. Tim has had an excellent season and this capped it all.

GB Men's K2 of Jon Simmons and Mark Childerstone had another excellent race, the high standard in the field was too much however, but a good well put together race saw them into eighth place in a really class field.

In the women's performances, Vicki Croucher paddled superbly well throughout the Junior Women's K1 race, her tactics, her pacing, her positioning were outstanding. She was hindered slightly at the last portage and the distance lost was impossible to make up so close to the line, but what a tenacious performance from a great prospect for the future. In the same race, Alice Haws gamely stuck at it and finished about 100 metres behind in a very creditable sixth place.

The Ladies K2 of Faye Lamph and Lizzie Broughton were the outstanding performers on the last day of racing. A good start, some brilliant wash-hanging, some equally effective portaging all the way round saw them in contention for a medal from start to finish. Such was their race that it led to quote of the day by commentator Jim Rossiter. When asked by his fellow commentator why the British paddlers always sat at the back of a group of four on the 'V' wash when few others did, Jim simply replied with a one-word answer, "Intelligence" he said. It sadly came unstuck though on the last portage, with fatigue creeping in, Faye slipped into the water putting in on the last portage, again, the gap that had to be made up was too great so close to the line.

A fantastic championships for the British team in tough conditions, well done everyone.

Fuller reports and results can be found on the Marathon Racing website at: www.marathon-canoeing.org.uk/

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You can't do it

On a number of occasions we hear that candidates are being turned away from Star Award courses they have booked on because they are 'not in the right boat!' Or maybe worse still, they are made to participate in an assessment in a boat they are totally unfamiliar with!

Feature by:
John Handyside.
National Competition
Development Coach.

Is there a right or wrong boat in which to do a 2 Star Award?

The 1 and 2 Star syllabi are quite clear in that 'any style of canoe or kayak is permissible'. Assessors should be able to cater for anyone turning up in a boat of their choice and demonstrating the skills in that boat that are appropriate to 1 or 2 Star level and the boat they are in. This includes candidates who wish to paddle and be assessed in sprint, marathon, wild water, slalom, freestyle canoes or kayaks or polo boats.

So if you do wish to do your 2 Star assessment in order to gain the award for its own sake, or as a pre-requisite for a coaching award, do not be put off going for your 2 Star assessment in your specialist boat. It makes sense that the boat that you are most familiar with is the one in which you should be assessed.

The syllabus and the assessor's notes are quite clear in what is required of the candidate.

The tasks that require completion are manoeuvres rather than specific strokes, so depending on the type of boat that is being paddled, the strokes used may vary.

Support strokes

Areas that are sometimes questioned in some craft are that the candidates cannot perform some of the skills required. Support strokes are one area that is often raised. It could be argued that paddlers in long thin racing boats do more support strokes in

the real situation on flat water than any other craft. What they don't do, however, is lean the boat right over and dip their head in the water to demonstrate this!

The C1 paddler in the photo on the left is using the blade in the water to prevent a capsizing on either side of the boat by upward or downward pressure.

Slalom canoe paddlers, owing to the nature of the boat and



Above: A slalom C1 using a cross deck forward stroke by Dave Leathborough.

the requirements of the discipline may perform cross deck forward strokes rather than switch sides. This would not be just to get the boat moving and is an integral part of the skill set required of a developing slalom paddler.

Sit and switch racing canoe paddlers, though, do just that: changing hand grip on the paddle as they switch sides regularly and frequently to keep the boat running in a straight line whilst going forward, rather than doing steering strokes that take the momentum off the boat

Sideways movement is possible in K1s, even with 'wing' paddles. There are one or two limitations with the wing, but sideways movement is not one of them. Whilst not in the classical vertical paddle shaft position, the movement is achieved still with a drawing or a sculling action and pressure downwards through the blade face to maintain stability. A

It could be argued that paddlers in long thin racing boats do more support strokes in the real situation on flat water than any other craft



Above: using the blade in the water to prevent a capsizing by John Handyside.

t in that!



Above: Sideways movement in a K1, with 'wing' paddles by John Handyside.

purely vertical paddle would not be as effective and any downward force through the paddle would not create any support under the blade. The wing blade loses its effectiveness when the blade is past the hip towards the stern of the boat, an area that the racing paddler has no need to enter under normal circumstances. Strokes such as bow rudders, hanging draws, sculling, even rolling are all perfectly possible. White water paddlers in racing boats and sea kayakers use wing paddles to great effect and result in forward paddling performance that is more economic and effective.

The need to have assistance to carry a boat is not as important with lighter weight composite boats. Whilst it is good practice for this to be taught, the probability that the paddler will be carrying their boat on their own at an event or even as part of the race (portaging) means that good single-handed techniques

“Sea kayakers use wing paddles to great effect and result in forward paddling performance that is more economic and effective”



Above: The need for water to be under a boat on entry by John Handyside.

should be coached where appropriate. Techniques for getting in and out of the different craft will also vary, certainly there is the absolute need for water to be under a boat on entry as there would be damage to the hull owing to the composite build of the boat. Additionally the blade can be used from time to time to give support when getting in or out. The particular circumstances will dictate this.

Edging

Another area that is often questioned is edging. There is a belief that boats will turn towards the side to which they are edged. This is not the case. The 'outside edge' as it is called is the natural way to get the best out of the boat shape in the water when on its edge. Wild water racers, slalomists, marathon paddlers all utilise this technique to assist their turns to great effect.

There are numerous other variations that are used by paddlers in their respective discipline boats. The strokes are applied as appropriate to the boat, the environment and the skill level of the paddler. What is important is the desired outcome. Has the boat gone where the paddler wanted it to go? Is the particular stroke being used safe and effective or in other words, "Does it work," and "how well does it work?"

So, for those that are going for assessments in their Star Awards, use the boat in which you are most comfortable and



happiest with. For those that are assessing, look at outcomes and if they being fulfilled.

Keep your eyes open for more information that is going to be available on the Canoe England website regarding the variations across the disciplines. 🦹

Left: Paddler utilising the 'outside edge' technique by John Handyside.

Four club openings – well done all!

By Chris Hawkesworth

As we all know, canoeing is expanding rapidly and our club infrastructure is struggling to keep pace. Improving our built environment is a long term goal of Canoe England and with each major project taking over five years from inception to formal opening, each with its own unique team of dedicated volunteers, it is with great pleasure that we can announce that four large club projects have opened in recent weeks.

In each of the last eight years around £500,000 pounds has been coming into Canoe England from Sport England for the improvement of community clubs under our CCDP (Community Club Development Programme) and more recently our CECG (Canoe England Capital Grants) programme. Some of this money has gone into the replacement of clubhouses, some into extensions to existing clubhouses, and some into targeted new build in areas where no canoe club existed.

The Rt. Hon. John Healey MP, Labour front bench spokesman on Health, opened the boathouse at Manvers Lake in North Rotherham, South Yorkshire on July 23rd. This is an example of a leap of faith by Canoe England into a regeneration area where no club existed previously. The building was funded by CECG, the Environment Agency, the Carbon Trust, the Coal Board Re-generation Trust, the Deane Valley College and a large developer Express Park TCN (UK) Ltd plus others.

On October 15th, Cambridge CC unveiled a changing and toilet extension on to their original River Cam side clubhouse to make more room for canoe storage. They have also moved and

modernised the kitchen. Their building is a grade 2 listed building owned by Cambridge City Council who put up over half of the money.

Also on the same day, Staffs and Stone opened their replacement clubhouse on the banks of the Trent at Stone. This too houses canoe storage, toilets and changing, clubrooms, kitchen and office. Full marks here for their novel opening by former World Men's Slalom Kayak Champion Richard Fox who joined the 250 strong party via video link from Australia. The Donald Bean Legacy, Stafford Council, the family of Ruth Holdway and the club itself provided most of the money.

On October 29th Shropshire paddlers opened their new clubhouse. This is a conversion of a former listed Montgomery canal side warehouse. The first floor on one side is road level on the other. This enabled them to be innovative with their design. The first floor houses a clubroom, boat storage, kitchen and office. The canal side ground floor, changing rooms, boat storage, toilets and a service point for British Waterways personnel.

The current round of CECG funding ends late next year and is currently closed to new applications



until more money becomes available. Application forms and other details are on the Canoe England web site under facilities. More details of these openings and more photographs of other CCDP and CECG funded projects are there.



Above and top: The Stafford and Stone CC replacement clubhouse facing the River Trent. Unveiling the plaque are Philip Leason Deputy Mayor Stafford Borough, Phil Gooding, Chairman S&S, former World Woman's Kayak Champion Liz Sharman.



Above: Shropshire Paddlers new club house. David Lloyd of Shropshire County Council on the left, Howard Blackman of Canoe England on the right, club chair Mike Seager in red also on the right, with club members unveiling their plaque.



Above: In the canoe seated is the Mayor of Cambridge, Councillor Ian Smith, with the Mayoress Mrs Margaret Smith. Standing is Dr Bill Block Chairman of Cambridge CC.



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(For BCU individuals who have received an allegation against them with respect to child protection and require support).

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline

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Safeguarding and Protecting updates and reminders

As part of our ongoing commitment to Safeguarding and Protecting children within canoeing, we have recently updated some of our policies and introduced some new guidance notes. All the documents can be found on the Safeguarding pages of our website: www.canoe-england.org.uk.

- Updated: the BCU Child Protection and Vulnerable Groups Policy – SPC P1
- New guidance notes for text and email messaging – SPC G20

We are also finalising some new social media guidelines which will be available from December – SPC G25.

Reminder. All coaches must have undertaken some form of Child Protection training by 31st December 2011 to remain an updated coach. Those who have not completed this requirement will no longer be classified as updated and unable to assess BCU awards. Details of the training requirements are on our website. Please note that we do accept a range of equivalent qualifications, recognising that many individuals will have undertaken training through other organisations.

About the Sport and Recreation Alliance

The Sport and Recreation Alliance is a not-for-profit member organisation. Our members are the national governing bodies (NGBs) of sport and recreation, including Canoe England and the BCU and we aim to make their work as easy as possible by representing their views to people who make decisions, by promoting the interests of sport and recreation and by campaigning on relevant issues.

Our campaigns therefore cover a wide range of issues because with more than 320 members representing everyone from canoeing to croquet our membership is incredibly diverse! At an event only last month we asked MPs to pledge their support to a number of our campaign topics. These included:

- Gift aid on junior members' subscriptions for Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) aimed at generating an extra 25p for every £1 paid in junior membership fees.
- Supporting the 'lighter later' campaign to move clocks forward by an hour all year round – allowing for more daylight in the evenings and so more community sport which will boost participation and club income.
- Negotiating on music licensing fees to create an affordable tariff for sport and recreation clubs.

In fact we're making some good progress on these, and other, campaigns. As part of our discussions on music licensing fees with PPL (Phonographic Performance Limited), non-profit sports clubs have now been completely removed from a proposal which would have seen rises in fees for clubs hosting a party or disco of, in some cases, over 1000%!

It really helps us in our campaigning and wider work when we can draw on facts and figures to support our cause, so we like to do our own research here at the Alliance too. Our 2011

Sports Club Survey spoke to 1,942 sports clubs across over 40 different sports. We look at the data at a UK wide level (weighted to be representative of all the sports clubs in the UK) and also by sport, below are some of the headlines for all clubs in the UK and canoeing.

- At an overall level the average club's annual surplus has fallen by almost half in three years to £1,091 in 2010. For canoeing clubs surplus funds have decreased by 66% from an average of £1,995 in 2009 to £686 in 2010.
- Membership fees account for a third of a typical club's income, but adult membership levels have fallen from an average of 117 members in 2008 to 104 members in 2011, and two in three clubs see recruiting new members as a challenge for them in the near future.
- Canoeing clubs however are more concerned with maintaining, recruiting and retaining coaches – a concern for four in five canoeing clubs, and three in four canoeing clubs are worried about the increased cost of training coaches.
- Local authority and educational establishments currently provide half of all playing facilities at an overall level, although 84% of canoeing clubs use public space to participate, more than three times as many as other sports.
- A large majority of clubs (84%) do not see the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games as an opportunity, however half of all canoeing clubs (55%) believe that exposure of canoeing through the 2012 Olympics will be an opportunity for them.

More information about the Sport and Recreation Alliance, our campaigns and research reports can be found online at www.sportandrecreation.org.uk.

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accessories, rescue equipment.

In brief

North East volunteer awards

Congratulations to the winners of the North East Region Volunteer & Recognition Awards
Access Award: Vic Brown; **Education Award:** Neil Brown; **Competition Coach:** Wendy Morris; **Coach of Year:** Ray Hudspith; **Community Award:** Janet Smith; **Event Organising Award:** Loraine Glendinning; **Outstanding Contribution:** Jack Henderson and Linda Pooley. **Long Service Awards** were also presented to Dave Gray, Jack Henderson, Ray Hudspith and Bernard le Fevre.

Blackpool OAG

As the last Friday evening event of 2011 OAG put on a special evening for the club paddlers. Over the evening the participants were able to race on the special edition Tim Brabants and Ed McKeever ergos. Alongside this there was also an opportunity to recognise some important volunteers in the north west, with Peter Roscoe receiving long standing service and outstanding achievement, Martin McCarthy receiving Coach of the Year and Helen Sharples receiving community volunteer of the year awards.

Bolton Canoe Club

Bolton Canoe Club have just received a Sport England Small Grants award for £10,000 to help extend their paddling sessions to two nights a week. The club are excited about the new opportunities that the funding will bring the club.

Oakwood Youth Club

Oakwood Youth Club had a great day out at Sleningford Water Mill, run by John Sherwen and his team from Duddon Canoe Club. This was a wild water racing day based on Wavehopper kayaks and the less experienced paddlers in general purpose boats.

Oakwood team is made up of young people from Salford that has various disabilities. The team came away with four medals and a great day's paddling. Three of the team Jamie Croft, Conner Davenport and Dale Hughes were on their first ever white water race with Jamie coming third in the under 16s.

The club would like to congratulate Stuart Conway one of their volunteers on archiving his FS&RT and Level One Coach.

For further details visit www.oakwoodyouthclub.co.uk.

Slalom success

On 25th September, Hexham CC ran its first Div 4 ranking slalom, which was a huge success with promotions in K1, C1 and C2. They had 30 entries in different classes, ranging from 7-year olds to people in there 50s. Hexham CC only had the Glendinning sisters competing in slalom until Chloe Glendinning encouraged younger people and they now have over a dozen! Hexham CC plan to make this an annual event.

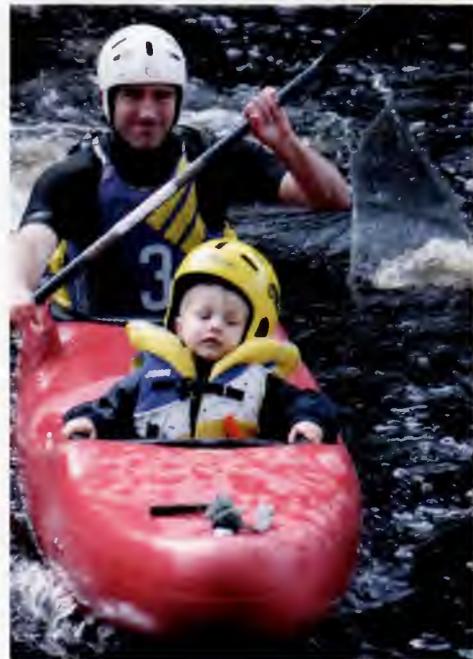
Pennine paddlefest day

On 18th September Pennine Canoe Club launched the opening of their new facility at Sugden's Mill, Brighthouse by holding a paddlefest event at the site. A range of activities and exhibitors were available on the day to offer something for all paddlers from beginner to expert.

The day included a novice slalom event, wild water races, a fun kayak challenge, polo demonstrations, come and try it sessions and there were also display stands and demo kit available from Robin Hood Watersports, Pyranha Kayaks and Fire Blade paddles.

The site is also the home to the ROKT climbing gym who helped support the event and accommodated an indoor kayaking event on the day using the ergo machines supplied by Canoe England. Many of the climbers were keen to try their hand at something different and some of the fitter ones were even challenging the paddlers to see who could post the fastest 200m times on the day.

The event was a fantastic success with over 70 people on the water and it attracted nearly 40 new people to the club as well as raising over £240 for the club funds.



The day was finished off with a barbecue and then a presentation by Darren Clarkson detailing many of his epic exploits on the rivers of the Himalaya. All had a great time!

Mersey Descent Canoe Race – 16th October

Everyone helped to make this event a success, with 20 people in the race and 26 in the accompanying 9.2-mile mini tour. In the 9.2 miles there are over a dozen rubble rapids and the long slope of Northenden Weir.

The touring canoe race was won by Adrian Fisher and Steve Sharp with three capsizes, two with excuses, one without. Mersey Descent addicts Sean Jesson and Richard Moss again raced each other with two children as paddle slaves. The white water racing kayak race was won for the fourth year running by Chris Davison, whilst Jonathan O'Grady made his first visit to the Mersey and won the K1 race and record holders in separate classes. Amy Wignall and Jamie Mayers teamed up and won the K2 race in a slowly sinking boat!

Thanks to the competitors and everyone who helped. The hospitality of Burnage Rugby Club at the start and Trafford Metrovick Rugby Club at the end was very welcome.

Coach development day

Manvers Waterfront boat club was host to the Team North Competition Coach Development Day on October 8th. This day was aimed to give coaches the opportunity to update

qualifications and gain more coaching tools for different disciplines of paddlesport.

The courses were well attended and enjoyed by all. Courses on offer were slalom discipline module, polo development course for coaches, key note and a range of foundation modules including fitness for paddlesport and performance planning.

After the success of this year there is a plan to run another over a weekend, October 6-7th 2012 at Manvers Waterfront Boat Club.

Diary date for 2012

The next Team North Coach Development Day is on October 6-7th 2012 at Manvers Waterfront BC.



Spotlight on Leighton Buzzard Canoe Club

The last two months have included the climax of the marathon and sprint racing seasons. Leighton Buzzard showed it has talent on and off the water by successfully organising national events and also entering strong teams that were rewarded with a clutch of medals and a couple of champions too!

Leighton Buzzard shared the responsibility of running The National Hasler Final with Viking Canoe Club who is celebrating their 50th Anniversary. This season over 100 clubs have competed in over 60 regional races to qualify. 593 competitors from 32 qualifying clubs raced on the River Ouse in the centre of Bedford. It was an

incredible sight to see hundreds of boats on this idyllic stretch of water.

The LBCC team comprised 40 paddlers competing in every K1 event from Lightning to Division 2. A fantastic entry from a team ranging in age from eight to 63! The club's gold medallist of the day was Megan Campbell in the Female Under 12 K1, with one silver and five bronze achieved by the rest of the team. Overall the club came fifth with 170 points.

October saw LBCC reintroduce the K2 13 Miler along the Grand Union Canal, an event much enjoyed by all. Please make sure you add this to your race calendar for 2012!



Halloween at Trentham

This annual event saw club members old and new, along with their families, paddle around the Trentham Lake in dark and mysterious circumstances! Accompanied by a group of paddlers from Pool Of Life, Breast Cancer Dragon Boat Team from Liverpool joined in with the 'spirit' of the event including the fancy dress competition.

The illuminated pumpkins placed in various locations around the lake made for an atmospheric paddle, all the more interesting as the occasional gust blew out the candles! However, the Staffs Uni Group were difficult to miss, adorned with neon glow sticks! Club volunteers not wanting to take on the water-borne spooks and staying on terra firma, did a sterling job serving hot food and home baked cakes to the hungry witches, wizards, vampires and skeletons! Thanks to all who attended, and especially to all the volunteers who made the event possible!



In brief

A great 2011

Well done to those clubs who have recently experienced the delight of the opening of their new or extensively refurbished facilities: Shropshire Paddlesport, Stafford and Stone and Cambridge.

Great to see well attended coach updates across the team during the autumn and the variety of workshops on offer at a variety of venues; each region has also staged a Coach Award Level 3.

Safeguarding and Protecting courses have been extremely well attended over the last few months as the end of the calendar year approaches.

Thanks to those contributing to information towards establishing and promoting a wider range of canoe trails and updating information from some of the old river guides.

Good to hear from more clubs taking up the availability of ergos and 'Luddocks' to add variety to their activity programmes and the use of Canoe England banners and 'pop-ups' to promote their events. Ask your PDO.

A steady stream of clubs are working towards Clubmark, engaging in the process, including health checks and preparing for their three-year reaccreditation as volunteers appreciate the value of the process and the advantages of a focussed approach to club management and delivery of paddlesport. More work for PDOs but we are here to help!

Coaching success

Congratulations and well-done to Colchester Canoe Club. Thanks to a grant from the Essex Community Foundation, they embarked on encouraging experienced club members into the coaching service. By October 2010, the club had 12 BCU Level 1 coaches added to the existing three stalwarts. By November 2011, they have expanded to 10 qualified BCU Level 2, three BCU Level 1 and one BCU Level 2 coach active within the club. Great achievement!

Lucky number seven

Bishops Stortford Canoe Club recently became the seventh club in England, and the fourth in the East region to attain the highest standard of accreditation, Top Club Gold. The club would like to thank Angela Aldam for her sterling work in putting together a very thorough and well documented evidence folder. This award will be of great benefit to the club, as they are currently hoping to embark on a major building programme on their site, to improve their club facilities.

Canoe-A-Thon

To raise funds for freshwater supplies to a village in Uganda this new charity organised a sponsored paddle along the Birmingham canal network from West Midlands Canoe Centre to Bentley Brook Leisure Park. Eight intrepid paddlers completed the six-mile route and raised £400 towards their target of £3,000. An excellent inaugural event – note 7th July in 2012.

In brief

Canoeing for all

Canoeists of a variety of ages and abilities took to the Thames water to take part in 200m and 500m races in high kneeling and sit and switch racing canoes. The regatta was held at Wokingham Waterside Centre and run by enthusiastic individuals and designed to provide an opportunity for novices in high kneeling racing canoes to race against other novices and also as a stepping stone to the national regattas.

More experienced paddlers also turned up, demonstrating the skill to race in a sprint canoe and providing great role models for the beginners. Seven ladies raced at the regatta, with at least four of them going on to race at the Nationals in September. Now that women's canoe is a World Championship event, let us hope we see more women at national and regional events, with the final aim to be at the Olympics.

Addlestone celebration

Addlestone CC were celebrating last month when they were awarded Clubmark. The most recent club in the south east to achieve this status had previously been working towards Clubmark for seven years. The club is now busy in its preparations for a celebration event.

Youth Games Award

This year Canoe England was short listed as one of three organisations for the London Youth Games Award for Community Partner of the Year.

It is a huge privilege to be nominated for this award, and is in no small way thanks for the hard work and dedication from the many volunteers that work hard to ensure that the events are enjoyable for all those that take part. Two of these volunteers, Andrew and Sam Keegan, attended the evening along with London's Paddlesport Development Officer, Clive Whitton.

The Tennis Foundation won the award, but it is encouraging to see the strides the canoeing events have taken in the last few years.

Freestyle Funday

On Saturday November 5th, Active Nation's Woodmill Canoe Shop in Southampton, played host to their first 'Freestyle Funday' event, an occasion which is to become a regular feature in the shop's calendar. Supported by Square Rock and the Jackson Kayak's freestyle team, this combination produced a day of inspiration and shared passion of paddlesport, a dynamic day for all abilities which brought together people wanting a taste of 'what it's all about' to the intermediate and advance freestyle athlete. Everyone of the 100 plus participants were able to book two workshops from a fun and games session to Intermediate freestyle moves and also sample any one of the 60 demonstration craft stock by the shop. A great event with some excellent feedback.

Check out the Facebook page at Woodmill Canoe Shop Freestyle Funday and watch this space for the next event date.

Surf weekender 2011

8-9th October. St Eval, Padstow, Cornwall.

Approximately 50 paddlers of all ages, from clubs all over the South West gathered at a wind blown field on the beautiful North Cornish coast. By 10am on the Saturday morning the bulk of the participants had signed in and after a quick briefing headed for Mawgan Porth.

The coaches worked on basic skills with the novice groups in the morning whilst Jack, Glen, Gary, Justin and Quinton organised and observed the intermediate paddlers. Pairing them up for ease of numbers and to promote peer learning, the groups drew on each other for confidence and inspiration whilst counting on the support team for help with emptying sunken kayaks and tips on how to improve.

The afternoon got brighter, the tide got higher and the waves started looking more like waves! The novices spent the afternoon working on the individual skills the coaches had identified, whilst the intermediate paddlers got the welcome benefit of individualised coaching.

Many of the participants and support crew then headed back to the camp for a BBQ, tales of their day and for some, an early night... others found



Above: St Austell Canoe Club Clubmark presentation.

more to discuss and share as night grew dark. The wind blew in the night and most had visions of more turbulent waters to face in the morning. However, Richard Sims arrived with a smile on his face and a positive outlook and the remaining paddlers regrouped and headed for Harlyn Bay.

The experience could not have been different from the Saturday: the waves were bigger than they seemed from the car park. The confidence gained from Saturday showed through in the paddlers and we were hauling them off in the end mostly protesting "just one more" ... another fantastic event that was enjoyed as much for the company and mixing of the south west paddlers as the very real progress made by all.

Paddlesport Development Officer – Wessex



Michael Sims, has started his new role as PDO for Wessex. Michael has just graduated from Loughborough with a BSc (Hons) in Applied Sport Science, particularly enjoying the module on sports development and taking on the role of competition and training secretary for Loughborough University Canoe Club. Michael believes the best part of the sport is the opportunity for everyone to enjoy as little or as much paddling as they like across the broad spectrum of different disciplines. He is looking forward to the future and excited at the prospect of watching paddlesport develop and grow.

Canoe England recognises local volunteers

Thameswey Canoe Club are a family friendly club that meet to train at the Cotswold Water Park but organise other activities for its canoeists. The youngest members are smaller than their paddles and the oldest have stopped talking about their ages but many of them took their first forays on the water with the same two people. Val Grutzmacher and Doug Manning.

The club love this amazing duo so much they put together a nomination for each of them under the BCU award scheme. The BCU agreed, so both men received awards presented by Andy Davey the PDO for the south west.

Doug received a 'Long Service Award' and with good reason. If you ask anyone in the Swindon and Cirencester areas who taught them to paddle then the name that comes up most frequently is Dougs.

He continues to paddle with youngsters where his experience is invaluable but more than that, under Doug's gruff exterior is a heart of pure gold.

Val received the 2011 'Services to Paddlesports' award for the South West of England. As it says in his nomination 'Val is not just an inspirational coach he's there to mentor young people with talent and push them on to the next level, he's there when a paddler suffers a setback or a scare, he's there to spot the knack you need to master that skill that's been eluding you for months. On top of all that Val is unfailingly gentle, generous and can relate to everyone at their level. He's always instinctively known that people learn best when they first of all felt valued.'

Thameswey CC are also celebrating achieving Clubmark accreditation this year.

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GB Paracanoes team member named 2011 ICF Paracanoist of the Year

After having become World Champion in the V1 200m LTA category in August, Patrick Mahoney has been voted the ICF 2011 Paracanoist of the year.

Pat was nominated for the award alongside seven other Paracanoists across the world that also competed in the 2011 World Sprint Championships in Szeged. This was the first time that the vote took place on Facebook and, receiving the most votes, Pat was then crowned 2011 Paracanoist of the Year.

Pat has achieved a lot this year and we wish him and all of the GB Paracanoes team, the best for 2012 as they continue through their winter training programme.

Have you got what it takes to become a future Paralympian? Email: Paddle-Ability@canoe-england.org.uk to find out about Talent ID days near you.



Personal Performance and Paddle-Ability

We frequently receive enquiries from coaches, clubs and centres about what personal performance awards are available for disabled paddlers. It is BCU policy that all tests and awards should be available to all paddlers and to this end a separate awarding system has not been developed for Paddle-Ability.

Frequently coaches contact us asking how they can adapt a course or assessment to make it accessible and the options are endless. For some, it may be assessing a course in a modular format whilst, for others, it may be talking a course mate through an activity that they cannot complete as a result of the physical ability.

There are lots of examples of disabled people taking part in paddlesport personal performance awards all over the country; here are two examples where clubs have used different techniques to support paddlers through their 1 Star award.

Kayaking with a learning disability at Hexham Canoe Club

As part of the coaching programme at Hexham Canoe Club, the club have been working with a group of young adults with learning disabilities from Mencap. Luckily for the club, Christopher Ashbury has professional experience of working with learning disabilities and therefore could lead the way. Christopher considered the numerous communication tools available; from Makaton sign language to using pictorial symbols, to see which of these could be easily added to a 'coaches toolbox' of experiences, influences, skills and understanding without the requirement of long and in-depth training.



The group had limited reading and comprehension skills so Christopher broke the syllabus down into a simple list of the skills that had to be achieved. He realised that the syllabus could then be described using a range of paddle specific images that would be similar in style to the Makaton symbols that the students would have been used to using at Dilston College.

It was decided that as the syllabus was pictorial, then why not coach in a similar way. With the minimal number of words, the group progressed through land-based techniques including learning how to hold the paddle, how to paddle, as well as getting in and out of the kayak. Then moving onto the water, the challenge was to continue to use minimal words, keep the language simple, use visual cues and most importantly to ensure the sessions were fun.

Christopher found that over a period of several sessions, the hard work paid off and as the weeks passed the students were getting good; some were even ready for assessment.

nance Awards

Challenge, adventure and inclusion at Meridian Canoe Club



Lorraine, Adam and Keith attended a 'come and try it' session held by Meridian Canoe Club. Di Wade was asked to work with the group of three adults, all with a visual impairment. After half an hour she was really impressed with their ability, particularly their sense of balance in the kayaks and confidence on the water. All three wanted to attend a beginner's course. So that Lorraine, Adam and Keith could receive the attention required to develop their skills, the club would provide extra sessions for them.

The five-week programme started with a session in the pool where the group completed the two length swim with ease. They were introduced to club members and completed capsizing drills and canoe rescues. For the second session on the lake, Di found the best method of coaching was to stand in the water, physically guiding and adjusting paddle and body position for each paddler. Before all sessions, Di would give a verbal explanation of what the group was going to do and encourage other members of the club to get involved.

As part of the course, the group completed a trip on the River Medway and were assessed for their 1 Star award. All three passed with flying colours, showing good kayaking skills and plenty of enthusiasm. At the end of the course the group had the opportunity to paddle on the legacy course at the Lee Valley White Water Centre. The club arranged with centre manager Paskell Blackwell for three volunteers to be trained up so that Lorraine, Adam and Keith could go down the course in a duo boat together with a sighted paddler.

Di says, "Coaching this group has been really rewarding and support from Meridian Canoe Club has been exceptional. I know Lorraine, Adam and Keith will join me in thanking all the members of Meridian Canoe Club who supported the group on, in and off the water."

Have you been working with a group of disabled paddlers? Have you developed any particular techniques to help develop their paddling skills? Please email your experiences to Paddle-Ability@canoe-england.org.uk.



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Canoe Foundation

'positively changing lives through canoeing'

Next deadline for grant applications: All applications must be received by Wednesday 4th January 2012 for consideration at the next Small Grants Panel meeting scheduled for Wednesday 18th January 2012

It's been a very busy time in the office, with submissions to the BCU Board to ratify the decision for the Canoe Foundation becoming the 'Official Charity Partner' of the BCU and all four home nation associations; arranging details for the charity's attendance at both the BCU's 75th anniversary celebrations and the Canoe England Coach Conference; not to mention all the work which went on behind the scenes in the build up to the launch of the charity's brand new website.

Having launched on Monday 31st October, the Canoe Foundation website will allow you to keep up with all the latest news, as well as finding out more about the charity itself, how you can support us, details and guidelines for accessing grants and a range of case studies showcasing the positive work we have and continue to undertake – check us out at www.canoe.foundation.org.uk

It has been great to receive your comments since the last issue of Canoe Focus. In this same period we have seen another increase in the number of people 'liking' our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/canoe.foundation) and following us on Twitter (@CanoeFoundation). This not only improves how we communicate with you, the paddling community, but also helps promote the Canoe Foundation further afield.

The Big Paddle and the Canoe Foundation



The Big Paddle is all about getting on the water; having fun and raising funds for charity. The Canoe Foundation are delighted to support this initiative and be part of The Big Paddle as we look to promote the charity further and increase fundraising activities. In total the event raised more than £700 to be split between the Canoe Foundation as the national charity partner and Hospicecare as the local charity partner. Donations and fundraising such as this allow us to continue to support thousands of individuals and projects in line with our five key areas: young people; places; heritage; international and equality in our quest to 'positively changing lives through canoeing'.

The Exe Big Paddle

The team were on site early on Sunday 2nd October, to set up The Exe Big paddle. It didn't take long for the Piazza to take on the appearance of a festival site, with tents, bunting and boats all creating a mass of colour ready for paddlers to arrive.

First up were the tours, fully booked out months in advance, the groups were keen to get out and learn about the nature and history of the Exe and adjacent shipping canal. We were lucky to have staff from the RSPB, Devon Wildlife Trust and an ex-head of the Archaeology Society as our guides, so those lucky enough to secure a place, came back a few hours later full of enthusiasm for what they'd learnt and seen on the five-mile loop.

Meanwhile on the Piazza, the sunshine brought a great mix of

participants, including passers-by keen to have a go at kayaking and canoeing for the first time. Our seasoned team from Bristol based canoe lifesaving club, Globe 360, were constantly busy and had to add boats to the pool of demos available as more and more people got out on the water.

Helping entice folk into giving it a go, were the popular Canoe England ergo machines. Racing over a 100m sprint, young and old gave it their all through the day trying to better a time set by development racer Michael Sims and to get a top ranking on the Top Gear style leader board. Predictably no-one beat Michael's time but that's what you'd hope with a national level athlete and it didn't stop lucky winners getting their prizes!

As the afternoon came around so did preparations for the finale of the day:

The cardboard canoe race. Starting quietly with boat building by Palm and AS Watersport's staff, the 'workshop' area soon became a teaming mass of people cutting, folding and taping card into weird a wacky shapes.

As building finished, a parade of boats let head judge Ben Hedden from Haven Banks Activity Centre scrutinise designs, before giving the entrants the go ahead to proceed. By now the banks were lined with spectators and, amidst the expected carnage, boats set off to try and get around a marker buoy.

Success was not widespread with some who'd put creativity in front of water tightness literally falling at the first splash. However the crowd began to roar as the first 'floaters' made it around the buoy and back on the home straight. At best many

made one lap, including an ingenious catamaran design from a local school, but as cheers continued a junior and senior race winner soon became obvious, as they were the only ones still afloat. Congratulations to Sea Hare and Back-to-Front, winners of the first ever Exe Cardboard Canoe Race!

It was a great event, fulfilling the aims of The Big Paddle by showcasing the sport to new participants and widening the scope for those who already take part, all in aid of charitable causes, which for the Exe event were Devon Hospice care and the Canoe Foundation.

This report is taken from The Big Paddle website, which can be viewed at www.thebigpaddle.com, where you will find further details about this initiative as well as information of future events.



An interview with David Florence

Canoe Slalom



Interview by Katriona Bush

With the final season before the Olympic Games now underway, we caught up with Olympic silver medallist David Florence, one of GB's top canoe slalom athletes, following a training session at Lee Valley, to find out about his hope and aspirations for London 2012.

At the start of 2011 you made the move down to Lee Valley to base yourself on the Olympic course. How important has this been as part of your Olympic preparation?

The course we train on here at Lee Valley is absolutely fantastic – state of the art and even if it wasn't the Olympic course being able to train on the quality of water here would be really beneficial. But the fact that it is the Olympic course, where we will race for Olympic selection as the first hurdle and then hopefully go on to the Games, makes it massively important.

How does Lee Valley compare to other courses round the world and what is the hardest aspect of it?

I think most people would agree that start to finish it is one of the hardest courses in the world and a really difficult place to paddle.

The reason it is so difficult is that it is big water, very fast with lots of big drops which also makes it an incredibly good fun place to paddle.



Does being an Olympic medallist give you confidence hopefully going into a second Olympic Games and will you approach things differently?

That was a few years ago now and I always take one year at a time. There are more recent achievements like winning a World Cup this year and getting on the podium at other races and consistently producing fast times that are right up there that give me more confidence right now.

Things will be different this time because I also hope to compete in C2 with Richard Hounslow as well as C1. Juggling the training for both is quite difficult and both events will be contested on the same day in the Olympic selection event. The sport has moved on since 2008 and I have moved on, so it is like a whole new challenge.

In January you are heading off to Australia for a training camp. What do you hope to get out of that?

We are going to train at the Olympic venue in Sydney which is also a great course. I am really looking forward to a few weeks of high quality training on some of the more technical aspects of my events that are quite difficult to work on here in the cold weather. When you train twice a day on the same course it is always good to have a new stimulus and a change of scene to break up the winter.

What excites you most about the prospect of competing in a home Olympic Games?

Having gone to my first Olympics in Beijing and seeing how different the Olympics were from any other event I had raced in was amazing and being at home is going to be even more incredible. I would love to be there next year and have the chance to race on this venue at the Olympic Games.

Who do you see as your main rivals?

I don't really see anyone as a rival as such as I don't compete directly against any one athlete. We all do our own runs and one day one guy is on top and then it can be different the next. There are probably two guys to beat in world terms in C1, Michal Martikan of Slovakia and Tony Estanguet of France, then the Hochschorner brothers from Slovakia in C2.

Describe yourself in three words:

Determined, focused and a perfectionist!





Lloyd's
Register

CANOE KAYAKS

Lloyd's
Register

7

David Florence

Olympic Silver Medallist C1

World Championship Bronze Medallist C2 Team

World Cup Winner C1

World Cup Bronze Medallist C2



Canoe England Volunteer



Canoe England celebrated the contribution of volunteers on November 19th as part of the BCU's 75th Anniversary celebrations. Held at the Belfry Hotel, Nottingham, the dinner provided the opportunity to recognise just some of many

thousands of volunteers across the country who have made it possible for our sport to have grown as big and successful, as it has done since 1936.

In its fifth year, the awards saw the introduction of the regional awards for the first time this year. Winners from each region were nominated in the national awards and, up to three in each category were invited to attend the dinner for the announcement of the winners. Award winners were entered into a prize draw on the night for the chance to win tickets to London 2012. A number of faces from the past and present were invited to announce the winners as well to hand them their award.

Now let's meet the winners!

Young Volunteer
sponsored by the
Canoe Foundation
James Duckmanton,
Slough Sea Cadets

At 17-years old, James, has volunteered with the cadets since 2004. James was successful in bidding for a grant of £13,806.45 from Youth Capital Fund and inspires other cadets to gain participation and coaching awards.



Paddlepower Award
Ian Whitehead,
Clacton Canoe Club

As a Level 3 coach and chairman of the club, Ian developed a junior club in Clacton after recognising the lack of opportunities available. The club is flourishing and Ian introduced the Paddlepower scheme to bring young people into the sport.

Event Volunteer
Janet Gillespie, Adventure Dolphin

Janet is the Paddlesport Coordinator for the southern region and organiser of the region's paddlesport series, which attracts 70 young people. Janet volunteers at local regattas and is coach to the club's paddlers.



Waterways and Environment Advisor
Chris Cleaver,
Macclesfield Canoe Club

Chris, who is regional Waterways and Environment Advisor for the north west region has been a strong advocate for the access campaign in his area. He has also organised the Mersey Tour over the last few years, and has worked tirelessly to develop canoe trails in his region.



Impact on Disability Canoeing
sponsored by the
Canoe Foundation
Panagiota Angelopoulou,
Surrey Canoe Club



Panagiota is the driving force behind the development of Surrey Canoe Club. She works with organisations to

offer opportunities and has secured funding to run free pool sessions for disabled people.

International Impact on Disability Canoeing
John Court,
Trentham Canoe Club



John has been involved the Paddle-Ability programme since its beginning. He is key in the development of

disability Va'a competition and in our bid for canoeing to become a Paralympic sport from 2016.

Community Volunteer Award
in memory of Ruth Holdway
James Roden,
Stafford & Stone CC/Trentham CC



James, is treasurer, committee member, event organiser and general volunteer. He also enlisted the support of friends

to organise events at Ironbridge to enthuse more people into the sport.

Male Coach of the Year
Ian Dallaway,
Birmingham Canoe Club

As a Level 4 coach, Ian is the West Midlands Regional Coaching Organiser. Ian is supportive of other coaches in the region and ensures opportunities are available to develop their coaching skills. Ian has been a volunteer for over 20 years.

and Recognition Awards

Female Coach of the Year

**Beth Ettinger,
Laburnum Boat Club**

Beth runs a youth programme, giving young and disadvantaged people the opportunity to gain personal and professional paddlesports qualifications to assist them in seeking employment. She is a BCU UKCC temporary director and is chair of London Regional Development Team.

Education Award

**Edmund Edwards,
Stoke Row Primary School, Oxon**



Edmund teaches at a primary school in Oxon and is a Level 3 coach. He developed an after-school club and has successfully made

the link between school and centre.

Performance Coach

**Daniel Ellis,
Westminster Boating Base**

Daniel is a UKCC Level 1 coach at the club. At the age of 19, Daniel coaches a range of sessions for different levels. He has been instrumental in the improved performance of the clubs paddlers in national events and the London Youth Games.

Outstanding Contribution for Club Development

**Jackie Ward,
New Forest Kayak and Canoe Club**



Jackie formed New Forest Kayak and Canoe Club in 1997 and has thrown herself into numerous roles to develop and ensure

the club membership flourishes.

**Ann Slator,
Devizes Canoe Club**



Ann was instrumental in setting up Devizes Canoe Club in 2009. In just three years, the club has 80 members and

Ann has taken on numerous roles to ensure the success of the club.

**Christine Norris,
Tandridge Canoe Club**

Christine founded Tandridge Canoe Club after identifying the need for a place for young people to paddle safely. Under the leadership of Christine, they were the first club to achieve Top Club.

Outstanding Contribution Chris Masters, Reading Canoe Club



For many years, Chris coached the GB Under 16 slalom squad. He also served as southern region slalom

representative and is well known for his interest in constructing slalom courses at the most difficult of venues.

**Tom Armistead, Devizes to
Westminster Canoe Race**



Volunteering for over 30 years, Tom is the longest serving member of the Devizes to Westminster Canoe Race as a

committee member and organiser. Over the years, he has taken on every position on the committee.

**Peter Bedingfield,
Tandridge & Shepperton Canoe Club**



Peter is south east slalom representative and coach at his club. He set up the London and South East region Grand

Prix to help encourage juniors to participate in and try slalom.

**Brian Greenaway,
Fowey River Canoe Club**



Brian was coach to the GB marathon team for numerous years. He now coaches young people at his club and guides them to

success in national sprint and marathon events.

**Jack Henderson,
Tynemouth Canoe and Waveski Club**



Jack is chairman and coach at his club. Over 25 years, Jack has encouraged many young people into the sport.

Despite recent health problems, Jack is one of the most active members of the club being on the club polo team and is a great role model.

**Mike Moffitt,
Friends of Allonby Canoe Club**



As a Level 5 polo coach, Mike is a stalwart of canoe polo in the UK. He coaches five days a week at the club and has inspired

many polo paddlers for over 20 years.

Club of the Year Awards 2011 Joint Runners Up: Adventure Dolphin and Duddon Canoe Club

Winners: Halifax Canoe Club



Halifax Canoe Club provides a wide range of disciplines for all abilities.

They are members of the Calder Futures partnership, which brings together local groups to improve the local environment. They actively care for the local environment



and hold three river clean ups a year and offer any unwanted equipment to other canoe clubs. In recent years, the club have run women-only taster sessions for International Women's Day and sessions for over 50s.



Women and Girls in Paddlesport



Celebrating

As another successful year for women and girls in paddlesport draws to a close we look back at some of the developments and achievements.

The Canoe England Women and Girls in Paddlesport programme was developed to increase the number of females participating in the sport; therefore it's great to see that Canoe England membership figures, coaching figures and Sport England Active People Survey results show growth across all target areas.

Female GB team members are also achieving world class results boasting four World Champions, a European Champion team and an additional 27 international medallists across all disciplines. This ongoing success creates great role models for young up and coming paddlers and the development of our sport as a whole.

2011 facts and figures

- 43% of this year's 'Go Canoeing Day' participants were female.
- 14,700 females take part in canoeing at least once a week.*
- 46,600 females take part in canoeing at least once a month.*
- 53% of all female canoeists are aged between 35 and 54.*
- 42 additional female coaches qualified through the female only Level 1 course this year.
- The percentage of female Canoe England members has increased from 22.8% to 23.6%.
- The percentage of female coaches has increased from 20.8% to 22.5%.
- There is now a female representative on the BCU board.

* Figures based on Sport England Active People Survey 5.



Above: Emma Wynter.



Above: Lani Belcher by Antony Edmonds.



Above: Women's K4 team by Antony Edmonds.

World Championships				
GOLD	Claire O'Hara	Canoe Freestyle	K1	
	Claire O'Hara	Canoe Freestyle	Squirt	
	Tamsin Green	Canoe Surf	Short	
	Emma Wynter	Canoe Surf	Long	
SILVER	Lani Belcher	Canoe Sprint	K1 5000m	
	Katherine Trotter, Rebecca Simon	Canoe Sprint	K2 1000m (JNR)	
	Deb Cook, Georgina Preston, Allison McIntosh, Naomi James, Bryony Devoy, Rosie Cripps, Jennifer Chrimes	Rafting		
	Stella Jelly	Special Olympics	K1 200m	
	Gabby Bates	Canoe Freestyle	K1 (JNR)	
European Championships				
GOLD	Zoe Anthony, Ellie Bates, Prudence Blyth, Charlene Cheung, Grace Galvin, Kathryn Grieves, Charlotte Lister, Aimee Robinson	Canoe Polo		
SILVER	Lani Belcher	Canoe Sprint	K1 5000m	
	Jasmine Royle	Canoe Slalom	C1 (JNR)	
	Alice Haws	Canoe Marathon	K1 (JNR)	
BRONZE	Lizzie Neave	Canoe Slalom	K1	
	Alice Spencer	Canoe Slalom	C1 (U23)	
	Mallory Franklin, Bethan Latham, Kimberley Woods	Canoe Slalom	K1 Team (JNR)	
	Elizabeth Barrett, Nicole Brain, Bethan Littlewood, Catherine Mather, Elizabeth Ponting, Louise Saxon, Charlotte Turner, Katie Davis	Canoe Polo	(U21)	
World Cups/ European Cups				
GOLD	Abigail Edmonds, Jessica Walker, Hayleigh Mason, Louisa Sawers	Canoe Sprint	K4 500m	
	Lani Belcher	Canoe Sprint	K1 5000m	
	Vicky Croucher	Canoe Marathon	K1 (JNR)	
	Lizzie Broughton, Fay Lamph	Canoe Marathon	K2	
	Vicky Croucher, Alice Haws	Canoe Marathon	K2 (JNR)	
SILVER	Abigail Edmonds, Jessica Walker, Hayleigh Mason, Louisa Sawers	Canoe Sprint	K4 500m	
	Zoe Anthony, Ellie Bates, Prudence Blyth, Charlene Cheung, Grace Galvin, Kathryn Grieves, Charlotte Lister, Aimee Robinson, Emily Martin, Meg Spittal	Canoe Polo	European Cup	
BRONZE	Alice Haws	Canoe Marathon	K1 (JNR)	
	Rachel Cawthorn	Canoe Sprint	K1 500m	
	Jessica Walker	Canoe Sprint	K1 200m	
	Lani Belcher, Angela Hannah	Canoe Sprint	K2 500m	
	Zoe Anthony, Ellie Bates, Prudence Blyth, Charlene Cheung, Grace Galvin, Kathryn Grieves, Charlotte Lister, Aimee Robinson, Emily Martin, Meg Spittal	Canoe Polo	European Cup	
Internationals				
GOLD	Bethan Latham	Canoe Slalom	K1 (JNR)	
	Mallory Franklin, Jasmine Royle, Kimberley Woods	Canoe Slalom	C1 Team (JNR)	
BRONZE	Hannah Brown	Wild Water Canoeing	K1 Sprint	

g 2011

Sport England Inspired Facilities Fund

Inspired Facilities
AN EASIER WAY
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Modernise your sports club. [Find out more](#)

Inspired Facilities is part of 'Places, People, Play' Sport England's programme to deliver London 2012 legacy of increased mass

participation in sport. It will be investing £50 million of National Lottery Funding in up to 1000 community sports projects between 2011 and 2014. Sport England has made applying for a grant as easy as possible, with no specialist knowledge required.

To help they have pulled together a catalogue of typical facility developments and improvements based on what sport clubs have said they need. You can use the catalogue to help you work out realistic costs, calculate your budget and gather the information you need for your application. The catalogues of improvements are grouped into five areas:

- Building modernisation.
- Outdoor sports lighting.
- Outdoor sports surfaces and AdiZones.
- Modular buildings.
- Sports equipment.

For more information and thoughts on how your club and community could benefit from an Inspired Facilities grant visit <http://inspiredfacilities.sportengland.org>. Consider how you could improve your equipment and facilities to attract and retain new people to the sport, in particular, women and girls. The next round of applications opens 1st Feb 2012.

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Women and Girls
in Paddlesport



Above: Alice Spencer.



Above: Claire O'Hara by Andy Aldred.



Above: Vicky Croucher.



Above: GB women's polo team by Glenn Summerbell.

First source to sea descent of the Congo River

Thanks to winning a fellowship and grant from the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, I was on my way to making the first source to sea descent of the Congo River in Central Africa, from the true source in north-eastern Zambia. Just short of 3,000 miles long, it took me five months in a 15ft 'Mad River Explorer' open canoe, a great boat and tough as old boots.

Canoe

Feature and photos by: Phil Harwood. **The Congo River has everything an open boater could want... flat calm swamps complete with lily pads, kingfishers and crocodiles, right through to Grade 6 raging torrents and waterfalls with everything else in between. With savannah in the south and dense tropical rainforest in the north, the Congo River crosses the equator twice before draining into the Atlantic Ocean. It's the deepest river in the world with the second most powerful flow rate after the Amazon. War-torn with endemic corruption, it was the hostility of the criminal minority that proved the biggest headache.**

Bearing that in mind I employed four locals as bodyguards. We paddled and floated for five days and nights on the river without touching land. The people were mostly friendly, and I generally received tremendous hospitality from proud and brave people, especially from the riverside fishermen who helped me wherever they could.

For me, there's something very special about starting a wilderness river journey, especially in a third world country. Everything becomes clear and uncomplicated, and priorities change. The moneymaking obsessions of the western world melt away and you're left thinking simply about finding food, firewood, shelter, and not drowning.

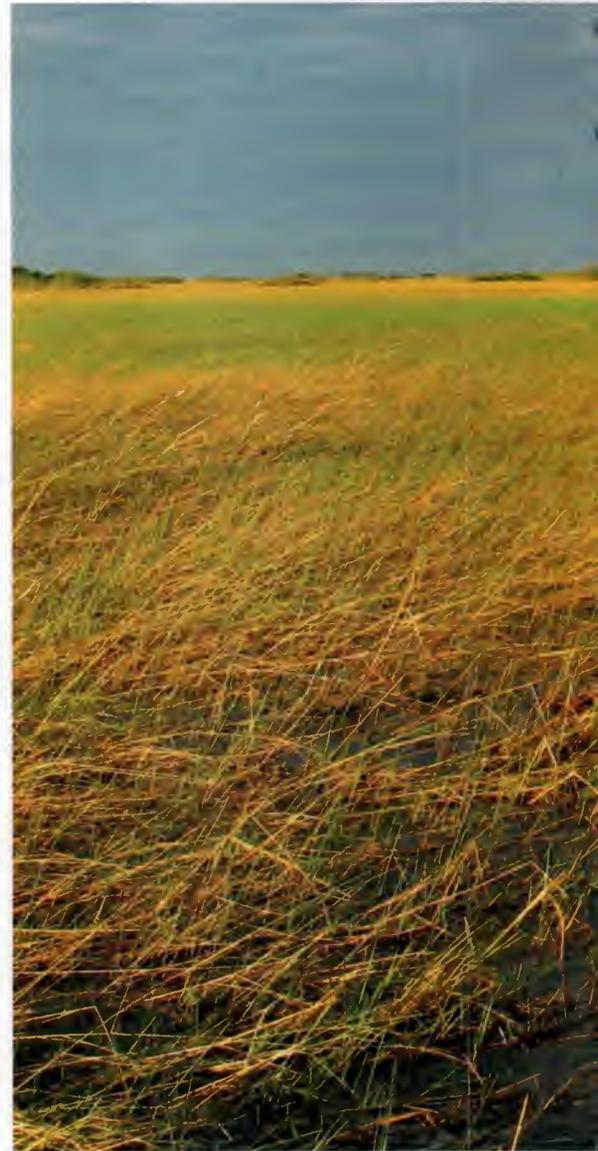
The Chambeshi River was the source of the Congo and a beautiful little stream; crystal clear waters, an abundance of birdlife and lovely little rapids to keep me on my toes. The canoeing was fantastic... the sun on my back and not a guide book in sight. Slowly but surely it started widening and the rapids started getting bigger, but never big enough to be life threatening. The only real risks were either being torn to shreds by the razor sharp thorn trees that seemed to lean out over the river from all directions, or getting the canoe pinned against a rock or on one of the many fallen trees crossing the water. On one occasion I rounded a bend in fast water, only to find myself thrust into a wall of tangled vines and thorns. I was well and truly stuck and only by using my machete did I manage to cut my way through. It was a far cry from the Tryweryn. After a few days, fast water gave way to lazy meandering bends that seemed to go on forever.

Crocodiles

Crocodiles were another consideration. The environment had now changed again, and where it had once been open and bright, the way became narrow and dark, with gnarled, twisted overhanging trees blotting out the sunlight. As I registered this change in mood

two twelve-foot crocodiles came crashing through the undergrowth and launched themselves off a four feet high bank. They belly flopped onto the water with a tremendous splash and disappeared

“The canoeing was fantastic... the sun on my back and not a guide book in sight”



Above: Poling through Bangweulu Swamp. Below: Morning mist on



ing the Congo



the Chambeshi River.





Above: Children playing in the canoes.



Above: One eyed fisherman on the Luapula River.

“What I didn’t have much experience of was the power of the boils, and just before the end I got slightly off line... and that was enough. Before I could do much about it, a surging rotating boil spun me around like a cork”



Above: The friendly fishermen.



Above: Wagenia fisherman at Stanley Falls.

directly under my canoe, the waves causing me to wobble in more ways than one.

Camp spots were scarce in the swamps. In the absence of firm ground, my technique would be to paddle as hard as I could, and ram myself into the thickest area of reeds I could find. I’d then try to somehow drag and push my way further through, until I was securely wedged in with little risk of capsize. Up would go my two poles and mosquito net, and by moving my two pieces of foam buoyancy together, I could stretch out and get my head down.

I figured that since I was surrounded by tightly packed six feet high reeds, I’d have to be pretty unlucky to get a surprise visit from anything big enough to fit my head in its mouth. On more than one occasion I was awoken in the middle of the night by crashing, splashing sounds, but after a while I got used to it.

Where it was too shallow to paddle, I lashed my poles together with strips of rubber inner-tube and stood up pushing off the bottom.

Weeks later after negotiating a couple of waterfalls and days of open rapids up to grade three, a wall of jungle confronted me and the river disappeared into it in a myriad of channels, with no suggestion as to what was the best route, or how long it would last.

It was pot luck. I’d known these labyrinths existed but hadn’t expected them here. The danger was – as I was soon to discover – that the gradient would often drop away ending with rapids or even waterfalls, and if you went the wrong way you might get sucked in before you could do anything about it. Alternatively there might only be easy rapids in there and after ten minutes you’d be back on the open river again. The hardest thing was not knowing, it could take me a whole day to get through going the wrong way, fighting my way back upstream, jumping out into waist deep water and dragging the canoe – or it could be a piece of cake.

Hundreds of arachnids

Negotiating my way around one rapid, I inadvertently and unknowingly brushed against a giant spiders web, and only when I was past the main drop did I become aware of a strange sensation. I was covered head to toe in hundreds of arachnids, crawling up my nose and in my ears. Frantically I dived into the water furiously rubbing the little pests off of me... luckily no-

one was watching. On a couple of occasions snakes also got too close for comfort, and would swim right up to me rearing a couple of feet out of the water and I had to fend them off with my paddle.

With a map of 1:2,000,000 some rapids were marked and some were not. Nafutu Falls certainly wasn’t on the map. It wasn’t a waterfall, but it was a decent rapid, and the forest had abruptly disappeared, giving way to a rocky gorge with a unique mushroom shaped rock at the



Above: Dugout vs Mad River Explorer.

bottom where the water had eroded it for thousands of years. I walked down to inspect it, and it actually looked quite paddle-able, albeit very boily. Basically the whole river was squeezed into a passage of about 30 feet wide.

What I didn’t have much experience of was the power of the boils, and just before the end I got slightly off line... and that was enough. Before I could do much about it, a surging rotating boil spun me around like a cork.

Gnarled and twisted vines

Just as I thought I’d had my excitement for one day, after an hour of open river I was confronted by another wall of jungle. It was weird because I started the day surrounded by grass covered hills, then into a jungle labyrinth followed by a rocky gorge, and now I was facing a wall of gnarled and twisted vines and thick greenery. The river of two hundred metres wide had once again dissolved into twenty smaller channels disappearing under the canopy.

In I went, and it felt like a different world. The vegetation hadn’t been this thick before. I could hear a permanent rumbling of rapids somewhere off in the distance, and tried to keep to the left hand side, not wanting to lose my bearings in the middle. Every now and then the rapids would increase so I’d try to backtrack and find the easiest path. I ducked under one vine only to disturb a crocodile slithering off a rock. The canopy at this point was all enveloping, with hardly any visible sky. As uncertain as I was, this was definitely what it was all about, and not having the slightest clue about what lay ahead, made the experience all the more adventurous. At



Above: Curly dugout canoe... did the job.

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Above: My catfish dinner.



Above: Hippos were an issue.



Above: Burning grasslands below the 'Gates of Hell' rapids.



Above: Paddling below Stanley Falls.

times the current was fast, requiring quick decision-making, and a constant need to read the surface of the water, to choose the best route, along with a need to look ahead to make sure I didn't get sucked into a tangled thicket. Then, all of a sudden, the flow seemed to stop, and I'd find myself paddling upstream without realising it, all the while hearing the distant rumble of rapids god knows where. Sometimes I'd spot a better channel through the greenery and have to squeeze

my way through the tiniest of gaps, taking great care not to cut myself on the most horrendous thorny vines I'd ever seen.

The rapids below the capital of Kinshasa are the biggest volume rapids in the world, and I thought it might be a good idea to portage around this section. From Matadi to the Atlantic Ocean I had Angola on the left hand bank, and after a couple of days I reached the sea and my journeys end. I gave my canoe to the chief of a tiny village in the coastal mangrove swamps. Suffice to say he was chuffed to bits as was I to finish.

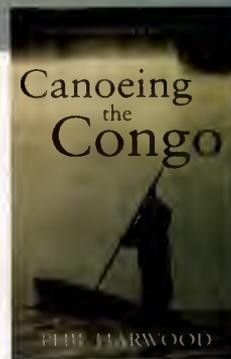


Above: Giant scoop net on the Lower Congo.

Three stone lighter, I'd still recommend the Congo River as an adventurous canoe trip for anyone wanting to get off the beaten track. ♡

Canoeing the Congo

For more information about the book *Canoeing the Congo: First source to sea descent of the Congo River* and the film that accompanies the book visit: www.canoeingthecongo.com



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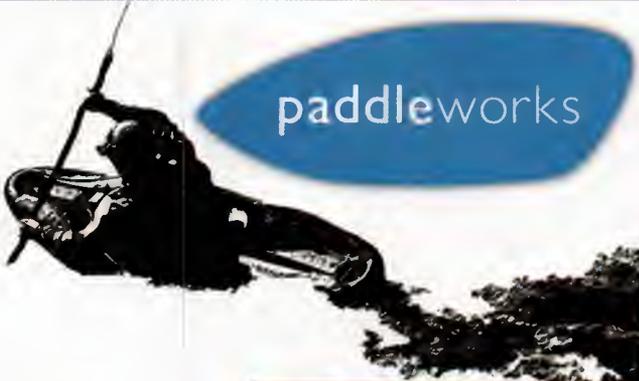
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Corsican refle

Sea kayaking the southwest coast

The ferry disgorged us onto the dockside of Ajaccio just as darkness was descending. At the back of the bay, 10km away, was a just visible row of street lamps, suggesting a beach in front of a road. We launched our boats off a marina pontoon by the uncertain light of busy bars and restaurants as passers-by looked concerned.

Feature by: Nigel Gill
BCU Level 4
Sea Kayak Coach.

Photos by: Nigel and Eli Gill.

Once clear of the town and its dazzle of lights, the sea became rather more sinister and exposed. The horizon would momentarily disappear between intermittent swells, gentle hill-like waves were coming in, lifting us up then lowering us down to obscure our view. Then, right in front of us, the sea erupted in an explosion of white – a ‘boomer’! ‘GO RIGHT - GO RIGHT!’ I shouted to Eli through the darkness. A swell had broken on a sub-surface rock, and had almost caught us.

But if there were swells coming into the bay, what were they doing on the beach we were aiming for? A surf landing at night could be a real adventure and for Eli a real mis-adventure. But our luck held and we landed on the beach with only one boat with its cockpit full of water. We put up the tent, pleased to have started the expedition in good style.

Rabid

The morning started well as Eli walked off and returned clutching a just-baked baguette and croissants made in heaven. We packed up and put on our gear. Hell! One of my neoprene boots was missing. Dogs had run through the camp earlier. We scoured the beach in both directions and found it 200m away, slightly chewed and possibly rabid. But I was relieved that I could complete the trip without a lot of undignified hobbling.

The northwest and southeast of Corsica have the best reputation for sea kayaking, but, without a car, our trip was determined by the availability of ferries to and from Barcelona, via Sardinia. Our trip ran down the southwest coast for 150km, taking ten days, from Ajaccio, down past, then returning back up to Propriano.

Although the area had been recommended to us, we were disappointed by what we saw from the ship on arrival. Nothing dramatic, just a gently sloping, indented coastline covered with Mediterranean scrub and a sprinkling of holiday homes.

But it proved to be better than we anticipated. The rock is a conglomerate that looks like granite, but in fact is soft and easily eroded by the sea. There are lots of fantastic



Above: Sculptured rock.

shapes – some as if eaten by acid, others like molten wax. There were fine beaches and views too and we snorkelled from most camp spots.

Being there at the end of September gave us the advantage of relatively few tourists, a warm sea and still plenty of good shore-side restaurants in which to savour the excellent French Mediterranean cuisine. In one place, a group of Americans had got up from their table leaving half of their food. With a shrug, the waiter passed us a couple of their untouched and expensive langoustines (monster-sized prawns). Entirely delicious!

Paddling in the Mediterranean has a lot to offer. You can camp on the beach, though it needs to be very discreet – tent up after dusk and down at dawn. If questioned, then say you will be bivvying - and use the tent as a sheet. The clear colourful water is beautifully warm from July to September but it's best to keep clear of the period mid-July to August as it gets too busy. Mosquitos are a problem, but only on still-air evenings. It's not as stormy as UK waters, but you still need to plan for one-day off-water due to the sea state. The tidal range is a paltry 12 inches but this can lull you into a false sense of security. If the sea builds up in the night, it can easily snatch



“There are lots of fantastic shapes – some as if eaten by acid, others like molten wax”

ctions



Above: Advancing breakers.

“It was an extraordinary place – like something out of Dante’s ‘Inferno’ – a vision of hell!”

extraordinary place – like something out of Dante’s ‘Inferno’ – a vision of hell! The roar of steam, a chimney (with a ‘WOOF!’) belching great plumes of flame that lit up the night time cloud, arc lights, smoke and barking feral dogs. We lay in the tent sweating and dabbing each other’s bites – the mosquitos had feasted on us.

On the ferry, we reflected that it had been another good trip in the Mediterranean. It was short on challenge but it had that winning formula of beach camping, sun, delicious food and some very pleasant sea paddling.

After arriving back in Barcelona, we caught a torrential thunderstorm as we trundled our boats for a couple of hours through the city back to Eli’s apartment. Kayaks running along Barcelona’s streets are a rare sight. One passer-by looked at them, then at us, and quipped in Spanish, “I know it’s been raining a lot but getting out kayaks is really over the top!” Soaked through, we laughed. We’d been caught by a Barcelona ‘boom – boomer!’

boats parked too close to the water’s edge (as some friends discovered one morning). The restaurant food is usually great, so it’s worth budgeting for this and skimping on costs elsewhere if needs be.

Wilderness section

A fine wilderness section of coast led us to the village of Tizzano. It was pleasant, with a small older quarter. We had a cheeky camp spot, secretly tucked away in a small rock outcrop on the beach beneath the town. In the evening there was an indignant ‘Oi, Oi!’ above us. We jumped, thinking we were being challenged but it was just an old man shoo-ing his donkey along the path above. In a beachside bar we relaxed in front of the sunset and sampled the local speciality – ‘Cap Corse’, a herbal wine made thick and sweet by boiling with sugar.

I like using ferries and trolleying the kayaks around. You can cut costs by travelling outside high season, booking the boats in as ‘bicycles’ and sleeping on the floor with a thermarest, rather than taking a cabin. Sleeping thus, we provoked one, very upright, Italian lady to look away then snort ‘Hippies!’

On the last night, back in Sardinia, we decided to camp near to the dock, ready for the early morning ferry. Eli thought we could camp in the port area but the police barred us and so we made for the scrub near to an oil refinery. It was an



Above: Kayaks in Barcelona.



Above: Discreet camp site.



Above: Beautiful scenery.



Above: Eli snorkelling with bread.

Three days on

Duke of Edinburgh Silver Expedition

A group of 24 teenagers from Bexley, south east London, gathered at Danson Watersports Centre to start their training for their Silver Duke of Edinburgh's expedition. Ben Bullen and Mick Cahill from Bexley's Integrated Youth Service delivered the training and were brilliant, despite the majority of us having never been in a canoe or kayak before.

Feature by: Sophie Morton. **Feeling somewhat nervous, as I didn't know anyone there, I made my way down to the lake and into a kayak. Two hours later, everyone's arms were aching but we had all learnt to kayak, which was a great achievement. Unfortunately,**

Photos by: Mick Cahill and Ben Bullen. **before we could go home, we had to capsize in a rather dirty lake in order to be allowed to wear the spray decks in subsequent weeks.**

The next week we were all back again, and over the following few weeks our instructors taught us a range of strokes and paddle techniques. By the end of May, we found ourselves on the Basingstoke Canal undergoing a two-day practice expedition. It was the first time we'd kayaked on open water, and also the first time of continuous paddling. Surprisingly, there was only one capsize in the group, and that was because several of the boys were messing around and tossing a ball between each other whilst in the kayaks. Most people found it a struggle, as it was the furthest distance we'd ever kayaked, and also the longest time: until then, we'd only had two-hour sessions.

The practice expedition didn't put anyone off as the following week, we were all back on the lake, ready to get some more practice in. We learnt more strokes and built up our stamina, so that in July, we could manage a sponsored 8km paddle to raise funds for equipment for our expedition. Eight laps of the lake were rather monotonous, but everyone managed it in just under two hours. However, the one thing that everyone was dreading was the first day of the real expedition, as it would be double the length of the sponsored kayak.

At the end of August, the group gathered in Tonbridge, ready to spend three days kayaking down the River Medway. Delays with the minibuses meant that we didn't get on the river until nearly midday, an hour later than we would have liked. We headed off all together, but when we reached the first lock, we split into three smaller groups to travel in. Each group of eight young people had six kayaks and a Canadian canoe, and we all carried our own kit. Two leaders sharing a Canadian canoe followed each group.

Seven locks had to be negotiated on the first day. Due to safety precautions people in the kayaks walked round the locks, but their kayaks were towed through by the Canadian canoes with the young people and the leaders. The locks



really slowed down our progress and we didn't get to our first campsite at Bowbridge Marina until 9pm. Once the Canadians were unloaded and the kayaks dragged up the bank and into the open field, the only way of putting our tents up was by torchlight. The sensible ones among us rummaged in our dry bags until we found them, and those who had forgotten to pack them had to make do with using others' torches afterwards. Cooking dinner at 10pm was an interesting but rather cold experience, as the Trangia cookers gave out very little warmth to us gathered around them.

Easier day's paddling

Sunlight woke us up early in the morning, and several people were feeling a little the worse for wear. Unfortunately, one of the girls was feeling so ill she had to go home, but the rest of us persevered down the Medway. It was a much easier day's paddling than the first, partially because of the shorter distance and partially because there weren't as many locks to go through. On the leaders' request, lots of blackberries were picked with the intention of making jam out of them, although the majority ended up getting eaten instead. Canoeing through Maidstone gave us a rather interesting look at the town from the water, as well as a lot of fishermen to contend with. We ended up at Allington, our second campsite, at a rather respectable 5pm, so putting up the tents was a lot easier and

“Canoeing through Maidstone gave us a rather interesting look at the town from the water, as well as a lot of fishermen to contend with”

the Medway



Above: Undertaking the 8km sponsored kayak on Danson Lake.



Above: Jenny Merralls and Connor Russell preparing to leave Allington.



Above: Sophie Holmes enjoying the sun on day two.

we weren't as hungry or cold either. As nobody had thought to bring any cards or anything else to do in the evening, it was spent chatting in the tents, sheltering from the rain.

It was another early start in the morning, and we headed back the way we had come, towards East Farleigh. Luckily it was only eight kilometres, which seemed short in comparison to the previous two days' distances. We stopped for a break under Maidstone Bridge, where a small group decided to toast crisps over a Trangia. Needless to say, marshmallows toast a lot better than crisps. Then we set off again and pulled our canoes out of the river at East Farleigh lock, thankful the expedition was over.

The expedition had been a great experience and one, which many of us could not have undertaken without the help of Bexley Youth Service and Danson Watersports Centre. I'm really pleased I've learnt to kayak and used those skills to complete a three-day expedition and gain my Silver Duke of Edinburgh's Award. 🏆



Above: The group just before we left Tonbridge.



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British Waterways update

With only six months to go to Vesting Day for the new waterways charity, the Transitional Trustees have updated stakeholders as to what their plans are and the dates they are working towards.



The Transitional Trustees have worked very hard since they took up their posts in May. In October they reported on the charity's progress. British Waterways will become the Canal and River Trust, which from next April will take responsibility for the care of the 2,000 miles of historic waterways in England and Wales.

The report sets out the trustee's thinking on membership, governance, funding, management and other matters relating to the new charity. It provides greater detail, terms of reference and timetables for the appointment of the Trust's Council and partnerships and announces the decision to seek three new trustees with experience in finance, investment and engineering.

There will be a Council, which as a council of stakeholders should be gathered from active waterway participants or those with particular expertise or knowledge relevant to the waterways.

Canoeists are by far the largest number (circa 60k individual and club members) who use the waterways under a collective licence held by the BCU.

The Trustees have therefore decided that the BCU should be asked to nominate a representative (for Council). In due course it may be possible for the BCU to elect a representative using their membership database.

Every potential member of council, whether elected, nominated or co-opted will have to be ratified by the Council's Appointments Committee as a person 'fit and proper' to hold the appointment.

More information can be found at www.britishwaterways.co.uk/newsroom/all-press-releases/display/id/3201

See the Response to Defra's consultation 'A New Era for the Waterways' which was published on 12th September – see www.defra.gov.uk/consult/files/110912-waterways-summary-responses.pdf.

Proposed Council representation

	CONSTITUENCY	INITIAL NUMBER OF COUNCIL MEMBERS		
		Elected	Nominated	Total
1.	Private boating	4	1	5
2.	Boating business	2		2
3.	Volunteers		(1)*	1
4.	Other supporters – walkers, anglers, cyclists, neighbours, donors, etc		(4)*	4
5.	Employees	1		1
6.	Historic environment		2	2
7.	Natural environment		2	2
8.	Local government		2	2
9.	Local partnerships chairs (including museums and all Wales partnerships)			13 <i>ex-officio</i>
10.	Co-options		3	3
INITIAL TOTAL				35

** To convert to elected members once electoral roll database developed*



Above: Andrew Bingham MP.



Above: Desmond Swayne MP.



Above: Jake Berry MP.

A kayak ergo challenge with a difference

September and October saw the annual political party conferences and as in previous years we went along to the Labour (Liverpool) and the Conservatives (Manchester) as part of the Boating Alliance.

The Boating Alliance, whose strap line is 'One Voice', consists of four national organisations representing different sectors of the UK leisure Marine Sector (British Marine Federation (BMF), Inland Waterways Association (IWA), Royal Yachting Association (RYA) and the BCU).

Whilst we are very different organisations there is a vast amount of commonality amongst the issues we need to raise with MPs and the political parties from off shore renewables to access, the new waterways charity (its funding and structure) to the promotion of recreational activities on the waterways for example.

The Labour conference was quiet but we were able to catch up with a few prominent MPs and lobby councillors.

We took a kayak ergo to the Conservative Party conference in Manchester to challenge the participants to see whether they could kayak in 20 seconds as many metres as Tim Brabants did during his Olympic Championship 1000 metre race. The ergo proved a real point of fascination with the occasional person calling it a rowing machine or even a giant cross bow but once the first person had set a distance... the gauntlet had been laid down and the action began! It proved a great crowd puller and it then gave us the

opportunity to discuss a variety of issues with them all.

The first MP to test his skill was Oliver Letwin, setting a distance of 62.7 metres. His target was a good one to beat and MPs began to challenge each other via Twitter. Even when they had set a score several came back to better their score.

Many of the MPs who took up the challenge had never been in a kayak or canoe before; some had rowed but most had never been afloat at all! Quite a few of the participating MPs were new and had only become MPs at the last election. Was your MP one of them? Why not invite them down to have a go on the water be it in a swimming pool or out of doors. Show them how brilliant the sport of canoeing is and what benefit it brings to all and how environmentally friendly the canoe is.

William Hague MP declined to go on the machine but was more than happy to talk with us and be photographed by the ergo. He wanted to avoid analogies that could be linked to him on the ergo such as 'up a creek without a paddle' but we think that in another situation he would have had a go and as he is fit he would have put in a good distance.

Do contact them... offer them the chance to develop their skills and find out more about our sport and the issues it has.

The MPs in the order of their final position

Dan Byles MP North Warwickshire and Bedworth	103.2 metres
Robert Goodwill MP Scarborough and Whitby	99.3 metres
Graham Stuart MP Beverley and Holderness	96.4 metres
Andrew Bingham MP High Peak	96.4 metres
Richard Benyon MP Newbury and Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Natural Environment and Fisheries (inc Inland Waterways)	92.2 metres
Jake Berry MP Rossendale and Darwen	91.2 metres
Bill Wiggin MP North Herefordshire	89.3 metres
Nick De Bois MP Enfield North	88.6 metres
Simon Kirby MP Brighton Kemptown and Peacehaven	85.0 metres
Desmond Swayne MP New Forest West	82.5 metres
Brandon Lewis MP Great Yarmouth	81.5 metres
David Davies MP Monmouth	79.0 metres
Michael Fabricant MP Lichfield	77.5 metres
David Lidington MP Aylesbury	76.4 metres
Sheryll Murray MP South East Cornwall	72.4 metres
Oliver Letwin MP West Dorset	62.7 metres



Above: Robert Goodwill MP.



Above: Sheryll Murray MP.



Above: Richard Benyon MP.

This extensive piece demonstrates the much wider and national problem concerning access on non tidal and even tidal waters. The recent experience on the Hampshire Avon is typical of many situations.

Hampshire Avon Angling Trust and

A group of independent paddlers planned to have an Autumn Paddle on the Hampshire Avon. The outcome of this has been a vitriolic press release from the Angling Trust that accused canoeists of illegal trespass if the paddle went ahead. It seems that once again the Angling Trust has decided to embellish fact with fiction.

The opening of the 'press release' reads...

"The Angling Trust, wrote to the Chief Executive of the British Canoe Union (BCU) today demanding that his organisation condemns a planned illegal trespass protest on Saturday 22 October 2011 on the Hampshire Avon. The Angling Trust has also asked for public confirmation that no BCU staff will be involved in the protest, and that the BCU will make it clear to participants that they will not be covered by public liability insurance while participating in an activity which is not recognised by the national governing body for canoeing..."

And it went on at length full of myths and fiction! Including this one, "The large, garish craft will also disturb the peace of the river and destroy angler's enjoyment of their sport by scaring fish away!" So how do those who fish from kayaks manage to catch lots of fish?

In addition there was this comment, "Any sniff of support for this illegal protest would be highly irresponsible from a national governing body. We have contacted the police and have asked them to take action to arrest anyone participating in aggravated trespass."

The trip was planned for 22nd October on the Hampshire Avon. Like many trips each year it was



Above: Looking-upstream-River-Avon-at-Bodenham.

Tidal River Avon at Christchurch



Not only are there objections to canoeing on the non-tidal waters of the Hampshire Avon, a right of navigation has been challenged on the tidal section. Large signs positioned by the Royalty Fishery saying SSSI and banning canoeing have been placed in the river, bank sides and on the A35 road bridge.

Canoeists have been harassed and the police summoned to remove them by unfounded allegations of environmental damage. Canoe England has taken issue with this situation and made enquiries on the authority and actions of the fishery to sign and prohibit navigation on these tidal waters.

Advice has been sought from Natural England on the use of tidal rivers for canoeing that have a protected designation and advised – canoeists would not need their consent to canoe along designated waters with or without a statutory right of navigation or a common law right; and this does not confer to them a right of access nor permission to do so. Also, the owner / occupier is not obliged to notify us of third parties unless they are themselves authorising an activity that makes use of it. Proof of

intentionally or recklessly destroying or damaging an SSSI or one of its features of interest could result in a prosecution.

The Bournemouth & West Hampshire Water Company, as the riparian owner for this section of tidal river has not denied there is a public right of navigation on these waters. The water company has leased the fishing rights to the Royalty Fishery operated by Southern Fisheries Ltd.

The highway authority for the A35 road bridge has confirmed the sign has been attached without authorisation and will be taking action to have it removed.

Canoe England believes their enquiries have clearly established there is a public right on these tidal waters and the Royalty Fishery has no mandate/authority to police an SSSI or prohibit canoeing. Canoe England is seeking the removal of the signage banning canoes and boats.

In the meantime canoeists using this water should note the tidal limit (NTL) is marked on Ordnance Survey and is at a point 250m upstream of the A35 road bridge. At one time there was a chain across the river at this point. When canoeing always be aware of water levels and exercise care to minimise any disturbance to the water environment. The Royalty Fishery has declined to meet with Canoe England and Natural England. Any further access difficulties should be reported to Canoe England (access@canoe-england.org.uk).

Autumn Paddle, national media

being organised by a private individual(s) and was in no way connected to the BCU or Canoe England. This proposed paddle led to much communication and even a very direct press release from the Angling Trust, "Angling Trust calls on British Canoe Union to condemn mass trespass protest."

Canoe England put out the following statement on their Facebook page on Friday 14th October 2011.

Canoe England contacted the Angling Trust after the initial allegations made on Radio Berkshire by Mr Martin Salter and before the recent press release from the AT, "Angling Trust calls on British Canoe Union to Condemn Mass Trespass Protest."

Mr Martin Salter alleged that the BCU were organising a mass trespass on the River Avon. We (BCU/CE) stated that we were not organising any event on the River Avon in Hampshire. Canoe England also stated that the paddle is titled the Hampshire Avon Autumn Paddle... it is not called a protest or mass paddle. It is merely a group of individuals who are going out to enjoy the river.

Since the press release from the Angling Trust, Canoe England officers have had communication with the AT and have reaffirmed that this trip has not been organised by the BCU/CE. It is one of many thousands of such informal trips organised by canoeists, members and non-members, on Britain's waterways on an annual basis.

The BCU/CE have contacted the EA who have confirmed that the salmon spawning season on the River Avon (Hants) is the end of October to end of March. The Hampshire Avon Autumn Paddle is on 22nd October so there can be no allegations of disturbing spawning fish.

The most recent research work by Rev'd Dr Douglas Caffyn has revealed that the Hampshire Avon has a legally enshrined right of navigation from 1664 which has not been repealed.

Subsequently, the paddle participants took the responsible decision to postpone the Hampshire Autumn Paddle for clear environmental reasons due to the exceptionally low river levels and the possibility of grounding in places. It may now be a spring paddle when the river levels are more suitable.

Daily Telegraph and the Jeremy Vine Show, BBC Radio 2

Monday 31st October saw column space and airtime featuring this story in the Daily Telegraph and on the Jeremy Vine Show, BBC Radio 2. Both the newspaper article and radio programme provided another insight on the attitude of some angling and land owning interests to the rest of society:

Daily Telegraph: www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/earthnews/8858404/River-peace-shattered-by-battle-for-right-to-paddle.html.

From the Radio 2 piece, whilst the angler made no reference to the law or the 1664 navigation act for the Hampshire Avon, the familiar argument of disturbance was heard, and met with more than adequate responses from the canoeist. The discussion with 'phone-ins' went beyond a polarised debate between angling versus canoeing as it should and drew out other interests with concerns over angling. Only a snapshot, but more than an indication that others and not just canoeists are critical of angling attitudes and actions.

The access to water issue and lack of rights that we maintain are a matter of wider public interest was again highlighted, as were the threats to canoeists. Mention was made of a warning that potentially lethal razor wire may be stretched across the water to stop canoeists (doing so would be with intent to inflict grievous bodily harm under the Offences against the Persons Act, 1861, Section 31).

It is an access episode that also reflects the findings of the University of Brighton study for the Environment Agency: Enjoying Water - Strategic Priorities for Water Related Recreation in London & the South East. The study found many parts of the region support little recreational access to water where a factor is the result of restrictive policies towards recreational access that has a significant impact on many people in the region.

Canoe England cannot grant or deny permission to use any waters and the choice to whether to canoe is the responsibility of the individual. As a membership organisation and in an advisory capacity, Canoe England has issued guidance for good environmental practice in the leaflet 'You, your canoe and the environment' – www.canoe-england.org.uk/media/pdf/youyourenv0206_lr.pdf



Above: Hampshire-Avon-above-Braemore-Bridge.

Waterway advisor changes – West Midlands

Mike Nicholls, Secretary, West Midlands RDT has also taken on the role of Regional Waterway Advisor. Mike has extensive knowledge of the waterways in the region having produced much of the access and river guide information on the regional website: www.canoe-englandwestmidlands.org.uk/Welcome/Placestopaddle/tabid/140/language/en-GB/Default.aspx. Email contact details for Mike: nicholls_mike@sky.com

Margaret Evans has stepped down as a Local Waterway Advisor and thanks go to her for many years in post and providing information for the River Severn between Bewdley and Tewkesbury, plus liaising with British Waterways and representing Canoe England at the local waterways users forum. The post is vacant and all enquiries should be directed to Mike Nicholls.

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More information, along with the terms and conditions are available at www.canoe-england.org.uk/about/photo-competition. The winners are announced on page 9.

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Above: Nicki Brooks – River Thames.



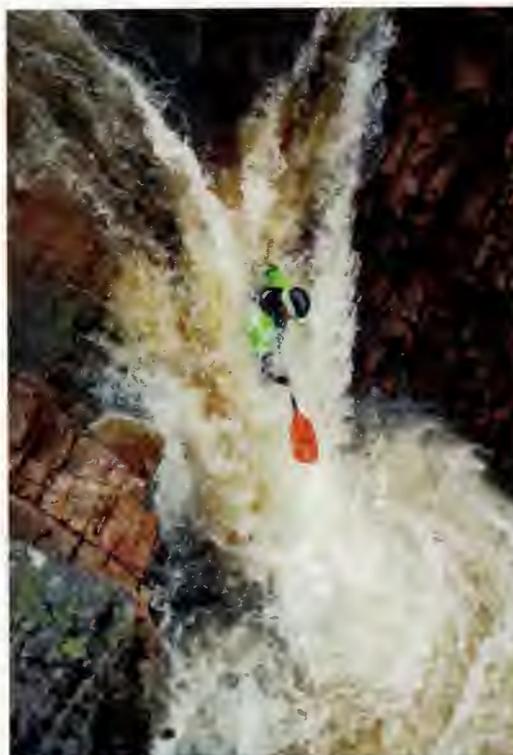
Above: September adult winner, Phil Eccles – Greenland.



Above: Phil Hole – Nene.



Above: Joan Eccles – Greenland.



Above: Simon Parsons – River Etive.



Above: September U18 winner Emily Donaghue – Bala.

tion



Above: Grant Underwood – Nene wild water race.



Above: Dave McCarthy – The Rabioux Wave on the Durance, France.



Above: October adult winner, Iain Linn – Fuglefjorden, Svalbard.



Above: October U18 winner, Ryan Day – River Tryweryn.



Above: Nick Herbert – Thames Barrier.



Above: Phil Lyon – River Soar.



Above: Malcolm Grey – River Thames.



Above: Paul Warrington – The Great Ouse.



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Must have BCU Level 1 Coach (UKCC), RYA Dinghy Instructor or RYA Windsurfing Non-Planing Instructor. Previous experience teaching outdoor education is essential.
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An interview with **Ben Oakley** Whitewater racing

How's this year been for you – have there been any highlights and/or disappointments for you?

I have had a pretty good year both in terms of results and river trips. The biggest highlight is also the biggest disappointment; I managed a top ten result at the World Championships this year despite studying full time. Although great its frustrating to be so close yet so far!

How is your training schedule affected during the winter months?

For me its not just the cold, it's the dark, wind and rain that make it tough. I do try and stick to the water in the winter but if it's awful conditions then I may do a session indoors on an ergo.

So, what's a typical training day like?

Right now it's a fairly equal mix of water sessions and the gym. I train between once and twice a day, normally before and after work but I have to be flexible since the hours constantly change. Over the winter period it's long slogs on the water and intervals but this changes, as I get closer to competitions. I do most of my training on the River Trent (in Nottingham) since it's the closest bit of water but I do try and get on the rough as much as I can.

Do you have to watch what you eat?

Nothing is strictly out of bounds but I do tend to eat as healthy as possible making sure I get enough of the right type of food to keep me well fuelled and fit.

How and when did you first get into canoeing and what made you choose wild water canoeing?

I was around 11 when I first started paddling; I went on a five-week beginner course and never stopped. I didn't start wild water racing straight away but the combination of whitewater and speed made it very appealing and I soon got hooked.

You've been training and competing since you were young – how have you managed to stay motivated?

There are times, especially when the conditions are miserable in the middle of winter when I wonder why I do it but whenever I paddle a good bit of river or go on a trip abroad, it instantly makes it worthwhile. I've been lucky enough to have had some amazing experiences in the past to keep me going.

We hear you're currently studying medicine at Nottingham University! That must be a huge commitment, how do you find time to fit canoeing in?

It is a big commitment and is the main thing that impacts on the amount of training that I can do, I wouldn't want to give it up though. With some help I've managed to be flexible with my training and train smart, making the most of the sessions I can do. The medical school do help me out by being flexible themselves so I can take exams at different times and juggle things around, it's a bit of a balancing act.

What's the best place you've ever visited, through the sport?

It's really hard to pick between Tasmania and the Drakensburg mountains in South Africa, both are incredible for different reasons.

Do you get nervous before a race?

Yes but not as much as I used to, I remember being incredibly nervous before my first World Championships as a senior but now, although still a bit nervous, I am able to focus and just enjoy competing. Before the start it's a mix of nerves and excitement, I try to get myself psyched up and focused on what I need to do in terms of lines and race tactics. In the final few seconds I just think

about making the first paddle stroke a good one and let everything else fall into place.

Next year, it's the World Championships in France. Who do you see as being your biggest competition, and why?

There are loads of top class paddlers competing at the moment making it hard to single anyone out in particular. However, the Slovenian reigning World Champion will be hard to beat as will the French being on their home course.

Which of your other team mates should we look out for in next year?

The one to watch would be Hannah Brown who narrowly missed out on being a World Champion in 2010 and is hungry for the title this time round! Also, Harry Postill is just starting but improving rapidly so it will be interesting to see what he can do.

Finally, what are you looking forward to in 2012?

Passing my finals (hopefully) and qualifying, I've been a student for a long time now. Also, a mid winter training camp in South Africa and working in one of the hospitals out there. After that I can't wait to get out to France and see what I can do.

Read the full interview with Ben on the Canoe England website, in the Members Area.

Nite Watches sponsored Ben earlier this year.

Visit his profile on their website at:

www.nitewatches.co.uk/unite/ben-oakley/

Quickfire questions!

I would describe my character as...

determined, outgoing and focused (according to the housemates).

When I'm not canoeing I...

am either in hospital or in bed.

The last book I read was...

clinical examination in rheumatology.

The last film I watched was... Flypaper.

The last time I cried was...

with laughter when Harry asked me to tie the boat on his car whilst he turned it round.

My ultimate goal is...

to become World Champion.

I relax by...

watching movies and trying to be sociable.

My favourite food is... lasagne.

My favourite TV programme is...

the Inbetweeners.

My favourite car is...

Renault Scenic aka the family wagon.

My favourite subject at school was... biology.

My favourite place, in the world, is...

at the top of a good river.

On my iPod, I'm listening to...

a bit of everything.

The person I most admire is...

Tim Brabants for going to the Olympics whilst still at med school.

I get really angry about...

having to repair my boat.

The one thing I'd change in wild water racing is... make it an Olympic sport.

If I hadn't got into wild water racing I'd be... bored

In 10 years time, I'd like to be...

successful and happy.



Above: Ben Oakley

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We are also looking to offer trainee instructor posts for which you would need to be 18+, have an aptitude to learn new things, an interest in the outdoors and a team player.



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Behind the scenes

Rayan Sammut – England Coaching Manager



Hello readers – I would like to use this space to introduce myself and let you know a little bit about my role as England Coaching Manager. I joined the Canoe England Team in early October and will be based in at the office in Bingham, though not constrained to it.

An excellent team of people support and work with the BCU and Canoe England.

This hard working team of staff and volunteers are mainly unknown to members. Many of you may have spoken to them or received mail from them at some time, so we thought we would unlock the mystery and show you who they are. They are a very important part of our organisation.

Recently, we've had some new additions to the team, who we're pleased to introduce!

I bring with me a dual background in the form of coaching involvement, predominantly, though not exclusively in gymnastics and also experience in the education sector, most recently as senior course leader at Huntingdonshire Regional College. Beyond work I escape to the outdoors as much as I can, usually rock climbing or mountaineering. I also suffer from chronic wanderlust and treat this with regular travels abroad (and back home to Malta).

As England Coaching Manager I have taken on complex projects with challenging targets. My main aim is to develop further the quality of paddler-focused coaching provision in line with current development needs.

In real terms this means I will play a part in both support and delivery. I will be working with the team of LCOs and RCOs to support the English coaching network in maximising the existing strengths and developing additional mechanisms for

meeting the diverse needs of English paddlers. Additionally a large part of my role is to oversee coach education provision including delivery of BCU/UKCC coaching courses and range of supporting modules.

It is evident that the coaching network within England has an extensive positive impact on the sport and I look forward to working together to make further advances



Richard Atkinson – Waterways and Environment Manager

Hello, I am the new Waterways and Environment Manager. I worked for the Environment Agency (and predecessors) for 20 years within the Fisheries and Recreation team. My role was to maintain, develop and improve fisheries in northern England whilst promoting sustainable access for canoeing, cycling, angling and other sports, which utilise Yorkshire's Waterways – not an easy job!



Within my recreation role I worked with Canoe England, local authorities and rivers trusts to improve access for all on a number of water-based recreation projects in Yorkshire.

My aim as Waterways and Environment Manager is to use my environmental knowledge to continue to promote and develop the work already carried out by CE and to improve working relationships and create partnerships with other organisations who are in a position to help increase access for us. They need to understand our needs and requirements whilst we develop our knowledge on how to protect the environment through education and our guidance and good practice leaflet – 'You, Your Canoe, and The Environment'.

It has become evident that our volunteers are the key to improving access, and I am really looking forward

to working with you and helping to provide the necessary resources to help develop your roles.

Great challenges lie ahead when working with other governing bodies and organisations that have an interest in the waterways and the surrounding environment. There is much common ground between our organisations to protect the environment such as working together on litter picks and reporting pollution to improve the water environment for people and wildlife. Together we can all break down barriers and enjoy the natural environment in a sustainable way.

Finally, I would just like to say that I am looking forward to joining you on the water and enjoying this wonderful sport with you.



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