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Input & Ideas



News & Events



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## Canoe Focus

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Your contributions make Focus happen. The quality and variety of news, articles, reports and photographs depend on the submission of material from you. Very few contributors are professional writers and photographers. Please don't be put off writing because you have no experience! Canoe Focus is all about canoeist to canoeist dialogue: a paddler's magazine written by paddlers. Technical information. Contributions are acceptable in clear handwriting or typed (double spaced). PC disks (3.5 or 5.25) can be read from most Word Processing programmes especially if saved as an ASCII file. Macintosh Files saved as DOS or ASCII can also be scanned. Photographic images are preferred on transparencies (colour slide). Artwork and line drawings should be clear and large. All material is accepted on the understanding that the BCU and it's agents cannot be held liable or responsible for loss or damage, although every care and effort is taken to safeguard material. Next Copy date is the 20th JUNE 1998. Material arriving at FOCUS after this date cannot be included in the August 1998 Issue.

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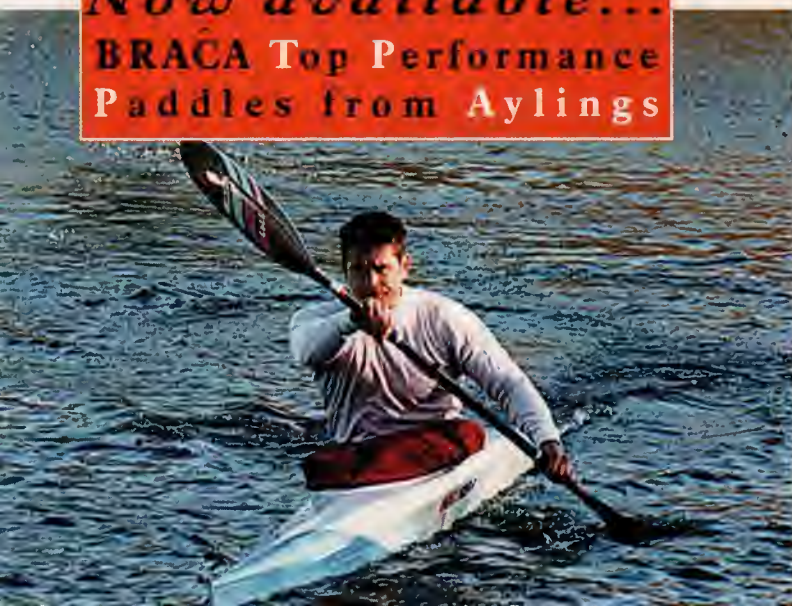


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# Performance Director Appointed



**T**he BCU has appointed a Performance Director, John Anderson, who will be known to many in the sport. He started work at the BCU HQ on 27 April 1998. The Sports Councils World Class Performance Programme is designed to finance elite excellence. John will be responsible for the management and implementation of the BCU Performance and Excellence Strategies and performance plans through supporting the work of the BCU competition disciplines. John who hails from Ayr in Scotland has joined the BCU after spending a short period of time as a Technical Officer with the National Coaching Foundation. Prior to this he served

for 22 years in the Royal Air Force as a Physical Education Officer and his final post was as the Chief Instructor at the RAF School of Physical Training at Cosford. John has extensive experience at a senior level in sports coaching, management training and training development.

Our new Performance Director started canoeing at the tender age of 9 and quickly developed an interest in paddling as fast as he could in a variety of craft! His formative canoeing days were spent canoeing on the sea and the rivers in the West of Scotland and Alistair Wilson (Lendal Paddles) provided some early guidance. After joining the Royal Air Force in 1975, John concentrated his efforts in the competitive disciplines of Sprint Racing, Marathon and Wild Water Racing. However, he has competed in several Slalom events and managed to play some Canoe Polo for the RAF. John also devoted a great deal of time to the development of canoeing in the Services.

John competed at a high level in Canoeing for over 20 years and represented Great Britain at Wild Water Racing and Scotland at Sprint and Marathon. He became National Junior Coach for Wild Water Racing in 1989, providing support for competitors at five World Championships. Since 1996, he has been the National Competition Coach for Wild Water Racing.

John's Canoeing interests have not remained solely with the competitive disciplines; he gained his Senior Instructor Award in 1976 and his Level 5 Coach Award in 1986. For 3 years, he managed the RAF Outdoor Activity Centre in Scotland. He has travelled a great deal with the RAF and has been involved in several major expeditions paddling in the Alps, Norway and the USA. In 1980, John and Drew Samuels broke the record for crossing the English Channel in a Racing K2.

In 1990, John was awarded the MBE for services to the development, organisation and management of Physical Education and sports coaching in the RAF and the voluntary sector. He remains committed to the development of all aspects of canoeing and clearly comes to the BCU with a wealth of Canoeing and management experience.

John and his wife Lynn live in Newark-on-Trent and their two sons Grant and Robbie are already enthusiastic canoeists. We wish him well in his new role and look forward to exciting times ahead for Canoeing in the UK.

## Extraordinary General Meeting

There will be an Extraordinary General Meeting of the BCU on Saturday 22 August to agree changes to the Articles of Association in respect of federalisation. Venue and further details will be available in the August issue of Canoe Focus.

## New BCU National Development Centre for Canoeing

The BCU are in the process of applying for outline planning permission for a new BCU National Development Centre for Canoeing. The centre which also incorporates the BCU Offices will remain close to the present site at the National Water Sports Centre in Nottingham and will include facilities for all BCU disciplines incorporating exciting new plans for Canoe Polo pitches on the Winfield Pool.

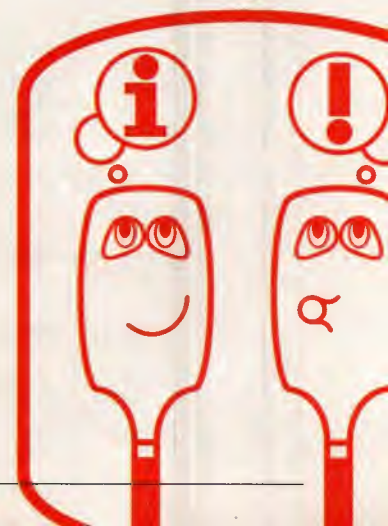
## Sydney Olympic Fund

Many of you will be aware that Matthew Sykes of the BCU Slalom Olympic Fund is aiming to raise funds to support the construction of the Sydney Olympic Slalom Course. If you feel that you are able to support Matthew's efforts in any way, please contact him by mail through the BCU office.

## Coaching Courses

Candidates wishing to attend Coach Courses from Level 1-5 need to pre-register with the BCU or WCA. Prior to attending the course. Please send an A5 sae to the BCU Office for details and a C1 form. Whenever you contact the BCU please remember to quote your BCU number.

Chief Executive  
Paul Owen





### April Canoe Focus - Apology

The wonderful article on Innishturk featured in April's issue of Canoe Focus was written by Ian Bowler. Apologies for omitting Ian's name from the article and many thanks for the two excellent articles included in this issue. Keep 'em coming!

### BCU Web Site

Re-launch  
The BCU Website has been totally revamped and will be re-launched by the time you read this issue, so why not give it a visit.  
<http://www.bcu.org.uk>

## Trevor Bailey Award for Endeavour

**W**e are pleased to announce that 1998's winner of the Trevor Bailey Award for Endeavour is Mr Donald Bean, MBE. Donald is well known by many people in the canoeing world. Unmistakable Mr Bean is usually seen on the banks of many of the major rivers around the world sporting a black suit, tie and trilby hat! Donald is in his 65th year of canoeing and has been involved in many expeditions and is always keen to promote and encourage younger paddlers into the sport. He is an active member of the Stafford and Stone Canoe Club and was nominated for the award by the Bailey family. The award takes the form of a whisky decanter and is presented in the memory of Trevor Bailey the former Director of the British Canoe Union.



Margaret Bailey presents the award to Donald Bean MBE

### Ras Dex to the Rescue

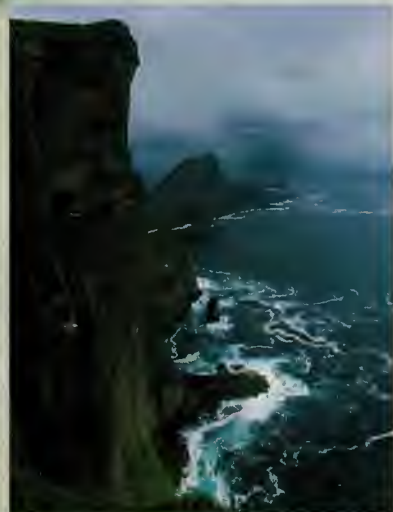
21 year old Marianne Siitas from Estonia made the 3000km drive across Europe to come and train at Holme Pierrepont. On a shoe string budget she parked her tent on the empty camping ground and looked forward to two weeks training. Unfortunately after being in Nottingham for just 4 days all of Mariannes home made canoeing equipment was stolen whilst it hung out to dry. Rob Soothill proprietor of Ras Dex canoeing equipment heard of Mariannes plight, and like a knight in shining rubber came to her rescue and presented her with a complete free set of paddling gear. Mariannes remaining time in Nottingham was thankfully less eventful and she gained two weeks valuable training.

### Helen Barnes Fights On

Citroen sponsored Helen Barnes is fighting back after her injury after last years Slalom World Cup. Helen had surgery on her shoulder in April which will hopefully fix the problem and enable her to train for the winter GB Team Selection in October. Her sponsors are kindly standing by her and we all wish her well for a speedy return to form.

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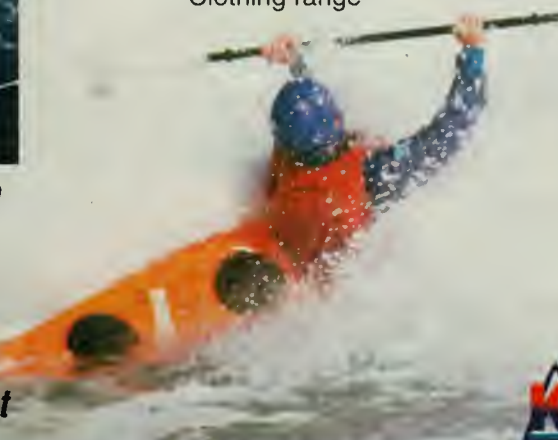
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# The Global Sports Fund

Launched in May will invest in companies across the world whose prime business is sports and leisure. This offers a highly diverse investment universe of enormous potential, which could include such names as Nike, Adidas and Manchester United. The fund, which is considered to be a medium investment risk, is intended as a medium to long term investment, normally to be held for a minimum of 5 years. The Global Sports Fund is unique because it offers investors not only the opportunity to benefit from this growing, international business but also the chance to help the development of the next generation of British sporting champions, through the introduction of 'GSF Sports Awards'. These awards will be administered by the Sports Aid Foundation, which, over the past 22 years, has contributed some £1.3m of funding to young canoeists, including Richard Fox and Lynn Simpson. As always the Sports Aid Foundation will be working with the British Canoe Union to ensure that the funding reaches those youngsters who need and deserve it. These will be youngsters not yet in receipt of Lottery Funding. The Awards will not be funded by an individual's investment nor from any investment gains but will be donated out of the standard management charges in proportion to the size of the fund. The minimum investment in the Global Sports Fund is £1,500, you can call for an information pack on 0800 150300.

## Wild Water Racing - Recent Changes

The Organisers for the Washburn 4 Wild Water Race on Saturday 24th October are now Burton Canoe Club, all entries should be sent to **Howard Blackman, 18 Newton Road, Burton on Trent, Staffs DE15 0TX**. Please note that the Wild Water Racing Team Managers telephone numbers have changed to: Andy Goodsell 01636 689061 Fax: 01636 689062. Before travelling to events always check the WWR ansaphone service the Thursday before the event to see what the water levels are and whether the event is still on Tel: 01483 824449.

## Taw Torridge Estuary

The Taw Torridge Estuary is gaining in popularity with watersports enthusiasts. The estuary has established its own safety code under the supervision of estuary manager Andy Bell, who says "We carefully worked out a series of guidelines for people interested in watersports with the aim of making sure there was room for all of them, without getting in each others' way. Safety is the number one priority with the code. That's the most important message and we are starting to get that through to our visitors". One of the activity centres where people gather all year round for get-up-and-go holidays in the midst of this highly safety-conscious environment is the BCU approved Skern Lodge Outdoor Centre in Appledore. Andy Milne owner of Skern Lodge said "One of the most important aspects of the code is its aims of controlling where power boats were allowed in the estuary. That makes it a lot safer for us as we want to take people out sailing or canoeing". For more detail on paddling in the Taw Torridge estuary contact Jenny Price on 01237 475992.

**Scottish Canoe Association**  
The Executive Officer of the SCA will be known as Miss Ailsa Spindler, with immediate effect.

## New Outlet Opens

A new canoeing outlet has opened in the North West near Manchester. Brookbank is situated only 30 seconds off the M63, junction 13. Tel: 0161 474 1499

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### On the Move

Playboating UK have moved to larger premises, their new address is: Unit 3, Howe Lane Farm, White Waltham, Maidenhead SL6 3JP  
Tel: 0118 932 1703.  
If you wish to send correspondence please continue to use PO Box 694, Maidenhead SL6 8UT.

## Performance Kayaks - New Developments

Performance Kayaks shop in Weston Super Mare has recently been extended which now allows Sea Kayaks and Open Canoes to be displayed in their own space, thus freeing up other space to cram in more paddling gear in the existing shop. For more info on their extensive range visit the web site at [Http://www.btinternet.com/~performancekayaks/](http://www.btinternet.com/~performancekayaks/) or E-mail [performancekayaks@btinternet.com](mailto:performancekayaks@btinternet.com).

## Lost Film of 1948 Olympics

An irreplaceable 16mm film of the 1948 Olympics has been misplaced. There is just a chance that this was lent or hired out to a member some years ago and never returned. The film was made by Oliver Cock, MBE, our first Director of Coaching, and features the canoeing events at Henley. As this is the 50th anniversary of those Olympics of yesterday Oliver is keen to locate the film and produce a tribute. If you, or anyone in your ken, can throw any light as to the likely whereabouts of the film, we will be grateful to receive the information. Please contact Wendy Blackman at the BCU office.

## Slalom Yearbook - An Apology from Mike Carter-Ranking Officer

In the process of compiling page 165 British National Champions 1997 in the 1998 Slalom Yearbook I regret that the results from the Llangollen Premier race on 18/19 Oct were taken in error, for the 'British Open' rather than the correct results from the race on Sat 25 Oct. As a result, full credit has not been given to the true British Open Champions. To all those athletes, and their families and friends, I apologise most sincerely and unreservedly. I must also apologise to those who were listed in error for any embarrassment caused, the correct names of the 1997 British Open Champions are: K1 Men- Paul Ratcliffe, K1 Women-Kath Pigdon, C1-Mark Delaney, C2-Nick Smith and Stuart Bowman, Veterans K1M-Keith Brown, K1M Jun - Tom Paterson, K1L Jun-Laura Blakeman, C1 Jun - Dugald Tavener, C2 Jun-Dugald Tavener and Matt Cooke.

## BCU Yearbook Amendments

### Page 19 -

Essex Canoeing Assoc - New Secretary, all correspondence to be sent to Mrs L A Cannell, 48 Canon Avenue, Chadwell Heath, Romford, Essex RM6 5RR Tel: 0181 599 0740

### Page 38 -

South West Region Treasurer is David Hawkins, Mill Farm, Summerhedge, Ottery, Bridgwater TA7 OSD.

### Page 38 -

SW Sea Touring Rep is Graham Dore, 8 Heytesbury Road, Bournemouth, BH6 5BN.

### Page 52 -

European Touring Events 25 Jul-1 Aug, Briancon, France water is graded at 1-4 not 3-5. Organiser Michael Bruce - 01932 828668 Fax: 01932 840005.

## North Sea - Solo

Jon Van Leeuwen, a 37 year old ocean paddler and kayak builder, will be crossing the North Sea on a solo trip on the 6 June 1998. He will be departing from Westkapelle in the Netherlands and expects to land in the vicinity of Harwich, he hopes to make the trip in under 24 hours.

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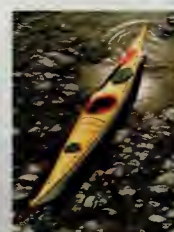
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# What's On



## International Festival of the Sea

August 28-31, Portsmouth Harbour. Be transported in time from the 18th Century through the time tunnel into the high tech 21st Century and the biggest ever gathering of Naval craft in recent years. Many displays will be taking place over the four days so why not take a visit during your summer holidays. For more info contact: 01705 725000 or fax 01705 725793

## Fife Canoeing Activities Group - 25th Birthday

Fife Canoeing Activities Group is proud to have been established for nearly 25 years. To honour this occasion, a Disco is being held on Friday 18th March 1999, at the Laurel Bank Hotel in Markinch. The current members would like to take this opportunity to invite all past members, along with their families and friends, to join us in celebrating this occasion. Please assist us in locating/ finding 'old or lost' friends, by passing the word around of this forthcoming event. For further information and tickets (limited to 200) please contact: Archie Crawford, 19 Courthill Drive, Glenrothes, Fife KY7 4TW Tel: 01592 773013

## River Usk Canoe Race

This event is open to all levels of experience as well as novice for Under 4m canoes, K1, K2 and C2 canoes. Run by Croesyceiog Canoe Club, Sunday 13 September, starting at Newbridge on Usk, finishing at Hanbury Arms Hotel, Caerleon, distance 8 miles. For more detail contact Martin Beer, 15 Firbank Crescent, Newport, South Wales NP9 7QR Tel: 01633 257612. E-mail martin.beer@orange.co.uk.

## Open Canoe Sailing Group Events

21 Jun - Cruising Meet, Forfar Loch, contact Eddie Palmer 01307 820454.  
27/28 Jun The Welsh Weekend, Bala, Gwynedd, contact Lis Woods 01248 671056. 18/19 Jul The Lakes Classic, Ullswater, Cumbria, contact Dave Stubbs 015395 34631 or Tony Ball 015395 33659. 22/28 Aug Scottish Week, Loch Lomond contact Dave and Marie Baskeyfield 01782 373903.  
29/30 Aug, Cruising meet, Loch Tummel, contact Stuart Sutherland 01674 671217. 19/20 Sept Windermere Weekend, contact Keith Morris 015395 34638 or Dave Poskitt 015395 33878. 17/18 Oct Autumn Weekend, Rutland Water, Leicestershire contact Bernard O'Connor 0116 2353532

## Peak Whitewater Challenge 1998

Due to the success of the Whitewater Challenge at the BCU Paddlefest. Peak have decided to run a series of three Whitewater Challenge events. Planned venues are Teesside, Tryweryn and Holme Pierrepont, Nottingham. The final will take place at Holme Pierrepont at the BCU Paddlefest and will include the International Whitewater Federation Series final, attracting the worlds 40 best professional whitewater kayakers. The whole event is about fun, mass participation and lots of paddling. The following disciplines are combined to find the overall whitewater champion, all participants must use the same canoe or kayak in all three disciplines:- head to head Downriver, 2 boats at a time race against the clock down a 600m section of white water. Rodeo/Freestyle, using a section of river, rather than just one hole, paddlers must demonstrate their ability to perform various moves, not just one move over and over. Extreme Slalom will be a 300m course of upstream and downstream gates, hand target number boards, a vertical hole move and horizontal wave move. Against the clock with penalties for missed obstacles only. Overall points will be added together and equipment prizes will be given to the winners. The £15 entry fee will include an event memento, unlimited water access over the weekend and entry to the event party or BBQ. A maximum of 180  
continued on page 10



# SPIRIT

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## Golden Oldies Paddling Challenge

Also organised by Royal Canoe Club on July 25th at the Club commencing at 15.00hrs. The veterans race is 5,000 metres, a launch will be provided from which to follow the real racing and the C2 Challenge will take place at 18.00 hrs, the event will extend into the evening with a jazz band and bbq, for more detail contact David Lawrence Commodore RCC, Highclere, 4 Sylvan Hill, Upper Norwood, London SE19 2QF,

## Blue Nile and Ethiopia

Adrift, the white water specialists are running an exclusive trip on the Blue Nile, Ethiopia this Autumn. Prices from £595. If adventure appeals call Adrift on 0181 874 4969

entries per event. Dates: 25/26 July Tryweryn, Bala. 3&4 Oct Teesside WW course (new date) 31oct/1 Nov Holme Pierrepont, Notts. For further details and entry form contact Peak UK on 01629 825133 or email [events@peakuk.com](mailto:events@peakuk.com).

## English Sports Council Conventions

A series of 11 Regional Sports Council Conventions for professionals and volunteers working in sport will commence in October. Organised by the English Sports Council for representatives from sports clubs, governing bodies and the local authority and education sectors. Topics such as the Lottery Sports Fund application process and facilities planning and land issues are likely to feature in the programme. Dates: 6/7 Oct Yorkshire, venue TBC. 8/9 Oct NW Reebok Stadium Bolton. 19/20 Oct East Chilford Hall Cambs. 22/23 Oct London Carpenters Hall. 26/27 Oct North Stakis Hotel Wallsend. 28/29 Oct WM Moseley School Birmingham. 4/5 Nov SE Chequermead East Grinstead. 11 Nov SW Bristol. 13 Nov SW(2) Torquay. 17/18 Nov EM Gateway hotel Notts. 19/20 Nov South Newbury Race Course. For more details and booking form contact Convention Hotline 0171 273 1589

## 1998 Hasler Final

The qualifying races for this years national inter-club and inter-region marathon 'Hasler' competition are now being fought out. There could be more than forty clubs from all over GB taking part in the final on the River Thames at Windsor on 20 September. The host clubs, Basingstoke Canal and Windsor Canoe clubs, are looking forward to welcoming you all, and hoping for a turn out of over 600 paddlers. Accommodation in Windsor may be in short supply, so book early. The Accommodation Bureau can be contacted on 01753 743907 (fax 743911). For race info contact Debbie Carpenter 01252 877982

## Pembroke River Canoe Race

This annual event held in memory of Roland Perkins will take place on Saturday 4 July at 12.30pm. The course is approx 6km long and runs from Pembroke Dock to Pembroke finishing on the Castle Pond in front of Pembroke Castle. 2 classes, 11-16 year olds male and female in plastic g.p boats, and the 'wrinklies' class all those over 16!, for teams of 2 or 3 in Open Canadian Canoes. All are welcome and if arranged beforehand Canadians can be borrowed. If you would like to take part in this fun event contact Rob John on 01646 687662.

## 50th Anniversary of the London Olympic Regatta

It is 50 years since the London Olympics held the canoeing and rowing events at Henley. Therefore, Royal Canoe Club have decided to hold a 5,000 metre progress/race on Saturday July 18th at 18.00hrs after the Thames Traditional Boat Rally. The rally attracts all manner of craft, and there are numerous side stalls for food, crafts, bouncy castles etc. there is also a vintage car rally and on the Sunday morning a large Boat Jumble. Entry for boats to the event will be free, but there will be a charge for each individual who attends the rally. This should be a great assembly of old canoes and kayaks, so why not join us. For more details contact David Lawrence Commodore RCC, Highclere, 4 Sylvan Hill, Upper Norwood, London SE19 2QF,

## Exe Marathon Racing Weekend 20/21 June

Saturdays race commences at 4.00pm from Dawlish Warren Beach the classic Exe Estuary Marathon Race. A Le Mans style start from the beach, out through the surf and into the estuary, up two weirs on the River Exe to finish at Exeter Canoe Club. The course is approximately 10 miles long and conditions can be challenging. There is an alternative start at Fishers Bridge on the River Clyst near Topsham for the lower divisions. Followed by an evening bbq celebrating the summer solstice. Limited floor space and camping nearby. Sundays race starts at 2.00pm from Exeter Canoe Club racing the Exe Circuit Marathon course. The Exe Estuary marathon is designated a K2 event for divisions 1&2 and the Exe Circuit a K1 event. Entries are welcome for both events from paddlers using any type of craft. The Estuary race is particularly suitable for Sea Kayaks and racing skis. For more info send a sae to Sean Morley, 51 Florida Drive Pennsylvania Exeter EX4 5EX

## Tryweryn Wild Wet Fest 27/28 June

This event has always been well supported by sponsors, and this year has attracted even more. Pyranha have donated £500 of gift vouchers. Cotswold have increased their support in the junior events and Palm have strengthened the river running competition. Eurocraft are now the sole sponsors of the inflatable event which includes boat loan throughout the weekend. The Palm Extreme River Running competition is now completely separate from the other rodeo competitions and is aimed at all river runners. New features include 'Best supporters prize', 'Best Paddler 16 years

or younger', a volley ball competition on Sat eve and live music by the Severn Band led by Hippy Dave. For more information contact Hairy on 01588 640419 or visit the web site <http://members.tripod.com/~Wetjun>.

## Scottish Marathon Series

Spend the last week of June in Scotland and race five races over eight days in spectacular surroundings and on crystal-clear water. The events are arranged to suit those travelling a long distance, so the first race, a 10k event, is on Saturday evening on Loch Ken, which is only 50 miles from Carlisle. The following day a full marathon is organised and then there is a two day break to allow visitors to move to Loch Lomond where the third event is held on Wednesday evening. Loch Lomond is well worth a visit and some K1 cruising is recommended. The many islands, some of which are inhabited, make for very pleasant touring. The Loch Lomond Marathon is a relatively short race of one hour duration, but it can be stormy, so come prepared. The last two races are on the Tay. On Friday evening a white water 10k event for K1's is organised. The event has the double advantage of giving paddlers a taste of what's to come on Sunday. Sunday is the climax of the week's racing with a serious 23 mile paddle down the Tay, including the major rapids between Campsie Linn and Thistlebrig. Paddlers do not reach them until 90 minutes into the race, then they have another 6 mile paddle to reach the finish at Perth. The race starts at 11.00am to allow our English, Welsh and Irish friends time to return home. Full details now available from Andy Morton (3 Park Place, Dollar, FK14 7AA) or Brian Chapman.

## National Go Boating Weekend

This is a major new initiative to get more people involved in all aspects of boating. Organised by the British Marine Industries Federation events will be running throughout the country over the weekend of 18/19 July. To find out what's on in your area call 0345 668844.

## Windsor Veterans Date change

In order to avoid a clash with the DW prize giving the Windsor Veterans races will now run on Saturday June 27th K2 and K1. Entries to Mrs D Carpenter 76 Bartons Drive, Yateley, Camberley, Hants GU46 6DP

Tel: 01252 877982



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A collage of three images showing kayakers in yellow jetskis navigating white water rapids. The top image shows a kayaker with a large splash of water. The middle image shows a kayaker in a yellow jetski. The bottom image shows a family (a man, a woman, and a child) in a yellow jetski. The text "Surf JET 305" is written in a stylized font at the top, with a cartoon piranha fish next to it. The text "The Lightweight 'Sit on Top'" is written in red. The text "that rips up the surf" is written in red. The text "&amp; is great family fun!" is written in red. The logo "pyranha" is written in a stylized font at the bottom, with a piranha fish next to it. The text "PYRANHA MOULDINGS LIMITED, Marina Village, Preston Brook, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 3DW, Telephone: +44 (0)1928 716666, Facsimile: +44 (0)1928 714399" is written at the bottom.

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## River Wye Navigation Order 1996

As we all know the public participation stage of the application by the Environment Agency to become the Navigation Authority ended last July. The decision of the Secretaries of State for England and Wales is now awaited.

There is much speculation. However, I can say that the Inspector's report and recommendations were made in February. As may be expected the issues involved are very complex and the Secretaries of State need time to consider the position carefully. It is hoped that an announcement can be made later this year. Watch this space!

## The Somerset Frome

The lower reaches of this river are very sensitive with fishing interests. The LAO has reached agreement for paddling to take place on the stretch between Fairleigh Hungerford Weir and Iford Weir on the following conditions.

- No paddling between 14th March and 15th June
- No more than one group of paddlers per day
- The LAO needs to give two weeks notice to arrange access.
- Egress to be made at Iford Bridge.

Anyone wishing to paddle this river should contact the LAO Michael Hill (In good time please) Tel: 01225 767622

## East Midlands - RAO

Peter Adams has asked that we publish the following note:

...Members please note that Peter Adams is no longer the RAO East Midlands Region and no longer acts as LAO for the rivers Devon, Smite, Idel, Maun, Meden and the middle Trent between Trent Lock and Newark. Enquiries regarding these waterways should be directed to the BCU office.

Captain Adams has resigned from all access activity as he is unable to support the BCU targeting of upland rivers, in particular upper sections of rivers in the Derbyshire Peak District National Park, which he believes will be ecologically damaged by mass canoeing.....

## The BCU Access Committee - replies

The BCU Access Committee is disappointed to have lost one of its Regional Access Officers and has written to Peter Adams to thank him for the voluntary work he has done for canoeing.

The BCU promotes its access policy in ways compatible with the conservation of the environment and wildlife. The BCU wishes to see the maximum practicable enjoyment by the public of the aquatic environment sustained by natural regeneration and management regimes.



# Help Us to Save Symonds Yat Rapids

We are negotiating to buy these internationally known Rapids to ensure their use for canoeing in the future.

If we do not they could be lost to canoeing forever.

The Symonds Yat Rapids Preservation Group is a local group representing all canoeists working with the National Governing body through the South West Region of the BCU to raise £1/4 million.

The intention is to buy the Rapids, provide proper portages and access including for disabilities, permanent jetties and slalom facilities.

It is not planned to change the recreational and slalom use that has taken place for many years.

If the £1/4 million is raised there should be sufficient to create an endowment from which future costs could be met allowing free use of the Rapids.

# The National Appeal

The National Appeal was launched at the NEC in February.

- Tremendous interest and support.
- Over £1100 worth of raffle tickets were sold.
- "I learnt to canoe on the Yat" "We must not allow the Rapids to be lost" was said over and over again.

At mid April - copy date - £19035 has been raised.

Thank You - we will publish a list of donors.

## What We Need

**Raffle** - To be drawn on 1st August 1998.

- Offers to take raffle tickets to sell.
- Offers to buy raffle tickets.
- Raffle prizes.

**Prizes:** Canadian Canoe, Weekend for two in a Wye Valley Hotel; Whitewater Playboat, Magazine subscriptions; Canoeing Kit; Painting; Books; etc.

**Donations** - to raise the matching funding. Cheques; Pledges (Credit Card facilities).

**Letters of Support** - for our Lottery Sports Fund bid which will have been made when you read this.

**Offers to Organise Fund raising Events.**

Come and meet us at Stonehenge 98 in June.

### Contact:

Symonds Yat Rapids  
Preservation Group  
Veronica Westlake,  
33 Golden Vale,  
Churchdown, Gloucester  
GL3 2LU  
Tel/Fax: 01452 531218





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Canoe Polo	Yes/No
White Water Touring	Yes/No
Placid Water Touring	Yes/No



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Article by Phil  
Eccles

Phil is a level 5 coach inland and sea, level 3 coach surf. He lives near Porthmadog at the eastern end of the Lleyn Peninsula and works at Plas Dol-y-Moch, Coventry's outdoor education centre.

# The Mystical Island of Bardsey



Gazing at a map of North Wales it's easy to imagine some Olympian God, stern faced and heroic, arm outstretched, hurling a small rock into the ocean, destiny unknown. Closer inspection will reveal that the tiny projectile is in fact the Island of Bardsey, all 2.5 square km of it, steep to and rocky on every shore except in the south where two exotic sandy beaches grace either side of Bardsey's isthmus. The hand which has jettisoned Bardsey into its splendid isolation is the western tip of the Lleyn Peninsula, a 'Land's End' of Wales and bastion of Celtic culture and language. This pointer of land is itself adorned with rough and broken foreshores and cliffs that reach skyward for 500 feet making them ideal breeding grounds for the high speed peregrine and rare chough.

**F**rom the furthest point west on the mainland to the Island of Bardsey is just 3 km or 1 sea mile and six cables. The water between the two is known as Bardsey Sound and just the mention of that name can strike apprehension if not sheer terror into both the hardened sea paddler who has crossed her on a bad day let alone the tenderfoot who dreams of the voyage but

who has heard the yarns, the tales and the myths which have created an aura about a trip to Bardsey.

In centuries gone by Christian Pilgrims were so concerned about the danger of the sea route with its notorious waters and fickle weather that three trips to Bardsey were equal to one trip to Rome. But the draw to the island was strong because buried there on the holy land were Dyfrig, Deiniol and Beuno men who had brought the gospel to Wales and over the years their final resting places became the focal point of hundreds if not thousands of pilgrimages from all parts of the Celtic fringes. Local folk lore decrees that there are 20,000 saints buried there and to some it is known to this day as the, 'Island of the Saints'. Many wayfarers returned year after year to pay respect and to seek their own personal 'Holy Grail', attracted by the magnetic allure of this gem of an island which appears so close yet is so tantalisingly distant. Bardsey is the kind of place where the need to return creeps assiduously into the consciousness and gnaws away until the pilgrimage is made once more and the dragon inside is laid to rest a little longer.

Others may leave the trappings of Aberdaron's holiday beach for the distant headland of Pen-y-Gil which accommodates a meaty little tidal race right next to the 100 foot high granite cliff. This is a whitewater play spot but not one for the timid as a failed roll or a missed break out will send the unwary towards Carreg Ddu, the most notorious rock in the area. The West Coast Pilot book, in its celebrated matter of fact prose astutely states, "The nearly continuous tidal race near this rock is dangerous to boats". With some of the biggest tides in the world cruising these shores there are places which command well deserved respect and Carreg Ddu is

one of them. In the middle of a 33 foot tide the water rips past the rock like a wild river creating a hole that most would wish to avoid like the plague and Rodeoheads can only dream about. If I close my eyes and think about it the hairs on the back of my neck begin to bristle with trepidation as I recall the sensation of speed, power and noise. Would it be possible to extract myself from that stopper behind the rock? How deep is the water just there? Would I get flushed out or would it hold me, roll and crunch me popping off the hatch covers in the process? What would my sea kayak look like after the debacle? For the next mile and a half there is only mayhem and bedlam as the sea is tortured with currents and counter currents, surges and standing waves, eddies and whirlpools, roaring breaking white water that jostles for position in a world of disorder which throws the pilgrim's course, if not his mind into confusion. I can recall the first time I lead a group of 'Advanced' standard paddlers through this maelstrom and I remember watching kayaks in front of me hitting a surge of water and being shot way off course. Paddlers of considerable experience struggled to pick any sort of logical course through the confusion that confronted them on that day. To keep any resemblance of tight group control is virtually an impossibility under certain conditions and any prospective leader needs to pick and choose the time to enter the Sound with careful planning and considered thought. The bottom line has to be "Can I get everyone out of any situation into which I put them?"

As in many other places the flooding stream is more impressive than the subsequent ebb. Across the Sound to the north of Bardsey lies Maen Bugail, a





home to Bardsey's people but now are let as holiday homes to those who wish to escape the worries of their world. To the east of the lane the rough heathery land rises abruptly to a summit 541 feet above sea level whilst to the west lies flat pasture land suitable for grazing cattle and growing hay. The buildings appear to huddle at the foot of the hillside which itself is like a huge curtain, drawn to hide the outside world from the islanders. The view to the west is normally an uninterrupted panorama of a vast mass of water but on days of extraordinary air quality fortunate visitors may see the Wicklow Mountains in Ireland some 60 miles away. There are no provisions to be bought or sold on the island and even water can be scarce in periods of dry weather. The only place that resembles anything like a shop is an austere room that displays leaflets, jewellery, souvenirs and some detailed scrimshaw. Payment for

rock the size of an inter state truck. The draining tide belts over this obstacle like a freight train in a hurry and the accompanying roar can be heard a long way offshore.

In contrast to the chaos of the water there is a serene and placid atmosphere on the land of Bardsey. The only highway is a rough and narrow unsurfaced lane which runs almost the entire length of the island from the distinctive square towered lighthouse in the south the ruins of the abbey in the north. Between them lie a couple of farms, a bird observation station and several houses that once were the

goods is by the time honoured honesty box. At the other end of Bardsey the lighthouse, too, seems to have no need for human supervision since it went automatic in about 1990.

Bardsey lighthouse's distinctive flashing sequence of 5 flashes every 15 seconds is etched onto the memory of all local seafarers and is visible from 28 miles away.

Hundreds of thousands of birds also seem to have Bardsey indelibly engraved into their heads, the island plays host to a huge number of visiting migrants. In particular is the amazing Manx Shearwater (puffinus

) which arrives from South America, or even Australia, in February and stays through October. With their wings just millimetres above the water and with an effortless gliding flight they are beautifully in tune with the sea and the air and yet on land they are ungainly shufflers that nest in burrows at night. They are known for their almost supernatural shrieking calls which some say are the voices of restless saints. Other visitors include rare Chats and Warblers and even an Osprey has been seen resting here on its way to Scotland. Atlantic Grey seals trawl the reefs for food and further offshore there are porpoise and bottle nose dolphins.

It is all too easy to be lulled into relaxation and to wrap oneself into the comfort of timelessness here. The very thought of leaving can be distressing and perhaps there is some connection with that part of Celtic mythology which believed that the islands to the west were the homes of the blessed dead especially when seen in the sunset. Or maybe for those who travel in small boats it's the ominous foreboding associated with the return journey across Bardsey Sound. Painful personal experience has shown how easy it is to bask in this Eden and to linger longer than is wise. The West Coast Pilot Book cannot hope to describe every trick and turn of every single current and counter current. It is primarily a source of reference for the larger ships and yachtsmen. The Admiralty chart goes hand in hand with the Pilot and gives more general information. As such the sea paddler often has to navigate by feeling what is happening and by using the store of experience that comes from being on the water many times. Bardsey Sound is a classic place where these skills are required. And yet no matter how many times I go and how carefully I plan the route something unexpected invariably happens. For example, the Pilot reads, "The South-going stream... divides and runs either side of the Island... reuniting 2 miles South East". In actual fact the South going stream rushes past the north end Bardsey in an Easterly direction which means that those of us with little horse power on board tend to get sucked through the Sound instead of making it down the west coast!

To the North and the South of Bardsey are strong back eddies which make leaving the island difficult to say the least. Several paddlers have told me how they paddled for long periods in the Sound and when they have checked their position with a transit mark they have hardly moved at all. It is as if the island is drawing them back to its shores refusing to let go the hold it has over them.

In the Welsh culture there is a word, "Hiraeth which does not translate too well into English but essentially it is a deep rooted feeling of a need to return, of nostalgia and often to the place where one feels spiritually at home. The trip to Bardsey is a real classic by which I mean it is perceived as being something of established excellence. For those with salt and adventure running through their veins this offshore jewel is likely to be high on their list of future trips.



**Ordnance Survey Map 123** available from most newsagents and bookshops. Admiralty Chart Numbers 1977, 1970, 1971 from most chandlers.

**Outfitters -** several, see British canoe/kayak magazines. The Anglesey School of Canoeing near Holyhead 01407 762525 had an assorted fleet of sea kayaks for hire. Best start and finish point is Porthor on the North coast of the peninsula. Another option is Abersoch on the South coast.

**Mainland accommodation:** Many campsites/Bed & Breakfast houses from £11-£17.





Your opportunity to write in and comment on what is going on in canoeing today

# Introduce More Young People

Dear Canoe Focus



2/3 years ago I was inspired by watching over 1000 people have a great weekend on the 'Tyne Tour' to start kayaking, so after a winter of lessons in the local pool with a friend I felt ready to paddle on a river, with my friend dropping out I warily went along to a lesson on Tyne Green with Hexham Canoe Club. I was very worried that an 11 year old girl would not be accepted by the others, when I arrived I felt very welcome, although only being good at going round in circles I stuck at it and have improved a great deal. Although the majority of Hexham Canoe Club's 100 or so members are

male, females are just as welcome (In answer to Sarah Noble's article 'out done by men' I think we are).

Every summer HCC has a 'Tidy up the Tyne' competition where teams in open boats race to collect litter from the river, which makes it nicer to paddle in, this is followed by a BBQ, other clubs should try this as it is great fun. HCC also has a surfing trip, a cold trip on boxing day and many social evenings including a meal at xmas time where we fill a local restaurant. I think that HCC does a great job with the local community in and around Hexham, Well Done!

I believe that in Horse Riding there is an established day where youngsters take a friend for a lesson with them, could this be a good idea to encourage and introduce more young people into the world of canoeing and kayaking?  
Sarah Purdy (aged 14)



## Litter

Dear Canoe Focus

I have been reading an article about litter in the latest edition of Canoe Focus. I am a member of Hexham Canoe Club near Newcastle Upon Tyne. I am writing to tell you that our members have one day a year where we all go out in teams using canoes. Each team has a black bin bag that we take up the Tyne. The idea is to collect as much litter as possible in the time given. The rules are simple; you must not leave your boat to collect anything. Each member of the team that collects the most rubbish wins a club T-shirt.

We have collected a few strange items such as a golf ball, a road cone and a fire extinguisher. We have also found plastic bags which are dangerous to animals, as well as the usual crisp packets and drink cans etc. One year we found a fireplace which we couldn't pull out of the bank.

I would like to add that it is not our mess (we are based at the country park) but we do like paddling on clean water... so we are still left with the problem of preventing other people from dropping litter.

Laura Mageean (aged 13)

## Tigris, Euphrates, Douro, Tagus, Guaduama, Guadalquivier or the Ebro

Dear Canoe Focus

Out of curiosity only, I am interested to find out whether or not either any individual or a group of canoe-campers have ever attempted to travel down any of the following rivers:- Tigris, Euphrates, Douro, Tagus, Guaduama, Guadalquivier or the Ebro.

I would imagine that any such expeditions would have been carried out between the years of the very late 1920s and the outbreak of WWII. Since 1945, various countries have developed a greater degree of paranoia than they had previously.

Also various countries have developed immense spring flood control schemes by way of enormous dams to prevent downstream flooding, nowadays these could easily lead to extensive haulage around the dams and great difficulties on reaching lower water levels on the downside of the dams.

I would visualise that folding canoes such as the German Klepper or the British Granta or Tyne would be the craft used, as fibreglass or other plastics had not even been invented.

I look forward with great interest to receiving your reply.

N B Towler

Ed's note - If anyone can help, please write direct to Mr Towler at 14 Silverthorne Drive, Southport PR9 9PF

## Derwent Wild Water Race

Dear Canoe Focus

Thank you for printing the details of the Derwent Wild Water Race that I recently organised. Following the race, I have had a chance to analyse the profile of the competitors who raced. The results show an increase from 1997 of 11 paddlers, which represents an overall increase of 20%. Further investigation shows that 14 of the competitors were not regular Wild Water paddlers, which by implication shows that the percentage of paddlers trying the event for the first time was nearer to 25%. As no other canoeing journal printed the details of the event, I can only conclude that the new competitors found out about it from Canoe Focus. Many Thanks

Nigel Stevenson - 1998 Derwent Dash Race Organiser

Ed's Note - So, it just goes to show, if you let me know in time, free publicity for your event gets noticed in Canoe Focus. All deadlines are published on the content page of each issue. I look forward to hearing from you.

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**Playboating Skills – Kayak**

5 Day: 28/6-3/7, 13-18/9, 25-30/10, 8-13/11  
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Article by  
Mark Potts

An epic? no, just adventure!



November 1997

Costa Rica is becoming a popular destination for kayakers from around the world. A tropical climate means you don't have to pull on layers of thick thermals to face the miles of good white water waiting to be discovered.



For more information, you can contact Andy at Kayaks and Paddles in Plymouth on 01752 335176.

**O**ur little adventure happened about a week into the trip. We had recovered from jet lag and to make things easier we had hired a vehicle and driver. So over six fantastic days boating on rivers ranging up to Grade V, we had already trashed numerous eddy lines, and surf waves were being carved down to size. The Whiplashes seemed to be made for these rivers.

#### Late Arrivals and Extra Surprises

Ronald Bottger from 'Instinct Rafting' had not only provided us with an excellent driver (Moises), but was also proving to be a good source of information on sections of river to run. During our first rest day another river was suggested to us. The river was the



Chirripo de Atlantico. We were told there was a 1 to 2 hour walk in, but if we started early enough we could get a full days boating and reach the take out before dark. This sounded like a plan.

Turrialba lies roughly two hours south west of the capital San Jose. A lively little town, from where most of the rafting companies work. We had based ourselves here and had arranged for Moises to collect us from the hotel at six in the morning. This was supposed to give us enough time to get to the river. Moises arrived late around 7 am, but we were not really bothered. Another little surprise, was we were joined by a local Costa Rican called Arturo. He spoke a limited amount of English, but we welcomed him. An extra paddler is always useful when going to an remote river. We hoped he had enough experience.

The drive took about two hours and we went far from the normal roads. On several occasions the Land Rover's 4 wheel drive was utilised. Most average vehicles would have been left struggling. Eventually even the Land Rover could go no further. A broken bridge crossing a small ditch was all that it took. The road disappeared into the distance.



Putting on the minimum of kayaking gear we set off. Carrying a kayak became hot work as we tramped through the tropical rain forest. If only the Land Rover could have got across that ditch. After an hour we reached a small Indian village. Arturo spoke with the natives and then informed us that the river was another three hours hike. It was impossible to turn back as our vehicle would have been long gone. The Indians offered to hire us a pack horse to carry two of the kayaks to the river. The third kayak we would have to carry between us. In our minds the word epic had not started creeping in, just adventure. How far is it to the river?

When we started again, we left the road and joined a narrow winding trail that climbed uphill. Nobody had mentioned uphill! Then again nobody had mentioned that getting to the river involved a four hour hike. The trail rose for an hour or more, eventually levelling out. The quality of the trail deteriorated badly until we were walking in ankle to knee-deep mud for most of the time. To start with, our imagination worked over time making us think leeches and snakes were waiting in every puddle or under every bush waiting to feed on our blood! The morning wore on, the sun rose higher in the sky. We tramped on, our bodies covered in sweat. Flies buzzed incessantly around our heads and bit our exposed skin. The kayak we were carrying between us seemed to get heavier and more cumbersome. The Indians with the horse and the other two kayaks had disappeared ahead, along with Arturo. Occasionally other Indians would pass in the other direction. Normally the women would keep their heads down and continue on their way. The men and children seemed amazed, or maybe amused, at seeing two gringos struggling through the mud with a kayak.

We came upon the others waiting in a wide section of the track, obviously the main highway through this part of the jungle. A smaller track dropped off to one side and we were told that this led down to the river. "How far is it to the river?" The question was asked. We were told an hour. Our spirits momentarily boosted we set off again. The Indians gave us the horse and said they would catch up. Leading the horse down this trail, which was very narrow, was difficult. The kayaks would catch in vines or go on the wrong side of a tree. The track being steep, and with the horses momentum, it just made the horse spin round. We would then struggle to get the kayaks and the horse pointing in the right direction and start moving again. After an hour we came across an opening through which we could glimpse the valley. In the bottom we could see the braided channels of the river. We still had a long way to go. When I met Indians on the trail I would try and communicate in my cave man Spanish; "How far is it to the river?" The normal reply I would get was; "Medio hora." Half an hour. We carried on for another hour until at last we reached the river. It had taken us five and a half hours. A small group of Indians watched bemused as we dived into the river, firstly to cool off, secondly to wash the

mud from our kayaks and bodies. The horse appeared indifferent to the fact that the boats had been removed. Without the horse, we would probably still be struggling through the jungle. It had saved us a lot of hard work.

### Unexpected night out

In my mind I was resigned to the fact that we were going to spend a night out under the stars without food, water and shelter. We had drunk all our water and I had no iodine to sterilise river water. It was three in the afternoon and we had three more hours of daylight. We decided to try and cover some of the distance before it got dark.

Putting on the rest of our kayaking gear we launched off. Relieved to be doing something other than walking. The river soon narrowed from a flat braided flood plain into one defined channel. The action started instantly with a four to five metre waterfall followed by a chunky hole. The white water came thick and fast. After the drop, we started on continuous Grade III and IV, which went to continuous Grade IV and IV+. As we continued downstream, more inspection was required and we ran a few Grade V sections. This was world class white water.

When we had started, the valley had been open with the jungle coming down to the river. As we travelled further downstream, the valley became steep sided and was scarred by landslides that had fallen into the river. Looking ahead, we could see the river's gradient dropping and the side walls snaking into the distance.

We were covering a lot of distance, maybe we could make it to the take out. All of a sudden the river dropped through a series of massive boulder blocks. This slowed our progress dramatically, it was definitely hard Grade V and we were portaging. After two hours of white water, along with the walk, our physical condition was deteriorating, so was the light. We continued in the vain hope that we could escape from the river. Things started getting out of hand when we got split up. We had run a Grade IV rapid in the dark. Arturo passed and I called him over, eventually I saw Andy's shadow appear through the darkness. We continued more slowly, only able to hear the river. We couldn't see a thing. When we almost lost each other again we decided enough was enough. If one of us had swum, we would have definitely lost a kayak, maybe more. We had no other options. Getting the kayaks up onto the bank took the last reserves of our strength and we collapsed. It was 6:30 pm and 11 hours until light.

As the stars came out, we could make out that we were on a huge flood plain. I became aware of the jungle noises. Crickets chirping, and birds whistling in the dark. The fireflies made erratic patterns against the trees on the opposite bank. I was too tired to move. I just laid on the ground and watched the stars. I dreamed about having something to drink and then forced the thought out of my mind. Andy found some sweets in a dry bag, but these too were soon gone. Slowly I drifted to sleep and spent a cold night on that rocky flood plain.

### Early morning work out

Early the next morning, after stretching aching muscles we started out once again. We were soon running some more Grade IV and IV+ rapids. It was 5:30 in the morning, this is hopefully the earliest I will ever have to paddle white water. After an hour, the river eased and then rounding a corner the mountains fell away into a huge plain. The river divided and flowed through braided channels. It was great to strip off the layers and feel the morning sun on my aching muscles. We paddled by ourselves, lost in our own thoughts until we came to the road bridge. Our sign to take-out. We later estimated that we had covered about 40 kilometres in five hours paddling time.

The next objective was to find our transport. We had already arranged that

Many thanks to Nookie for providing gear to survive in this Alien environment. Also many thanks to Montane and Taunton Leisure. Andy Round thanks Perception, Yak and 'Kayaks and Paddles' for their on-going support.



Moises should hang around near the take out if we didn't turn up. We could cover any costs later. Andy wasn't going far, his feet having been severely trashed from the walk-in. Arturo offered to walk up the road to the nearest house. He returned a little while later with a broad grinning Moises and the Land Rover. He had found Moises waiting at a road side restaurant. Moises thought it was highly amusing that we had had to spend a night out unexpectedly.

Our first priority was to get some fluid down our necks, which we did in great gulps. Never did water taste so good. Next we went in search of food. The traditional breakfast of rice and beans was eagerly wolfed down and quickly followed by large amounts of chocolate. We then returned to the hotel and after explaining about our little adventure, we crashed. After a couple of days rest, we were back on our paddling programme, eager to find more adventure!

We spent three weeks in Costa Rica and managed to kayak extensively throughout the country. This was made all the more easy by hiring the Land Rover and driver from 'Instinct Rafting'. This also eliminated any stress of leaving a hire vehicle in a remote area whilst you went for a day's kayaking, or maybe two. We found the Costa Ricans to be friendly people. Admittedly we were on a boating mission, but it is equally possible to go to the beach and chill. The country has a lot to offer.





Article by  
Mick and Ann  
Dowsett

# A Mobile Home for Royal Sutton C.C.

## A sprint at the end of a marathon

### Mick's Tale

Seven years ago a chance remark made by the club's coach whilst taking a training session one Sunday afternoon on the Fazeley Canal lead to our present unique situation.

**D**uring the cooling off and drinks period before loading canoes onto trailer and roofracks Rob Leadley said "You know what we need is a container to keep the canoes in, I bet there's a farmer who will let us put one in a field as long as we paid some rent". We stood around discussing this and decided to bring it up at the next committee meeting. This we did and it was decided to go ahead. Now, this is where unknown to them Worcester Canoe Club came into the equation. Royal Sutton Coldfield C.C. had entered a Marathon race held at Worcester, after the competition I sat in their first floor bar area overlooking the river, drinking coffee, I thought "No way am I settling for a container" let's go for a real club house, if Worcester can do it so can we!!, my thanks go to Worcester for their inspiration.

I set about finding out all I could about raising money, remember there was no Lottery at this time. I contacted anyone and everyone who might listen to our plans and empathise with our aims, Approximately £30,000 was the response, together with agreement for cost price materials, free labour, free delivery, a coal conveyor belt from a local colliery set up to allow us to launch and retrieve disabled paddlers from the canal etc. etc. As you can imagine I was "over the moon" From a single container we had progressed to a "Portacabin" base with changing rooms, toilets, showers, club room, disabled access and storage for canoe and associated equipment. Having been assured by British Waterways that there would be no problems as our chosen site was just going to have a change of user and not a change of use. I found that planning permission was needed, now things got complicated.

The local planning authority would not allow steel buildings under any circumstances, traditional brick and tile construction only, so I had to redesign using traditional materials. British Waterways where still in favour so plans were drawn up and submitted to the local planners and extra money raised to finance the higher cost. but In



the time it took to gain planning permission British Waterways allowed a commercial user to operate from the site (using garden sheds), stating that the site would support both users. The local planners took a different view ruling that only one operator could work from the site, not surprisingly British Waterways chose the commercial operator. So there we were, with planning permission granted, building regulations approval granted, Sir Norman Fowler (local M.P.) booked to open the building, Melvyn Jones booked to give us a demo., and we were told to stay off the site. What made matters worse was having to watch it being operated illegally with no planning permission, the planners being impotent in forcing the regulations. So we were out on our ear. This quite literally broke my heart, I suffered a heart attack and had to give up club work for the foreseeable future. Ann Nicholls (wife of the club chairman) takes up the tale.

### Ann's Tale

I took up the reigns after Micks resignation and had many discussions with British Waterways and the planners but to no avail. British Waterways did offer another site but it was heavily fished with a number of fishing clubs having an interest in that stretch of the cut, a meeting was convened with the anglers and we were told in no uncertain terms that we were not wanted. So we were out on our other ear. Visits were made to all the local authorities and hours were spent pouring over maps, visits were made to all the farmers who's land bordered the canal, all to no avail. We needed a decent length of canal without locks to make life easier and to assist our disabled paddlers, time was rolling on it was

now 1995 and the original idea had been proposed in 1991! A site was found not far from the original site but it had difficult road access. Traffic surveys were carried out, meeting with the council planners, site conferences held etc. Eventually we were informed that the road would have to be realigned to allow safe access, the cost was more than the building so we rejected it. A local architect who knew some planning loopholes was engaged to redesign the site access and apply for outline planning permission. The planners were not at all helpful and bought up various problems including redrawing the plans twice, and when we were asked to redraw them for the third time the architect hadn't the heart to charge us for the third set even then the plans had cost us over £600 and a years work simply to have them turned down. So we were out on our behind this time. This was a low point, I had lost all interest and could not even look at the project for a couple of months. By this time, Christmas 1996, Mick had more or less recovered.

### Mick's Tale (continued)

Just after I arrived back on the scene the club were approached by the Local sailing club with a view to us sharing their facilities, and using some of our grant money to improve them. Having agreed to do so we then found that, at their A.G.M. their membership voted to reject the plan and so having definitely run out of whatever we could be chucked out onto we were out again. Then came a real threat, our major sponsor told us that they could not hold the money for us any longer and that unless we could use it by the following May it would



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The Dhow will be used most evenings of the week for club activities and will be available for parties to book for courses or just as a base. Any canoeist who is in the area can drop in and see us at Aldridge, you can be sure of a warm welcome from Royal Sutton Coldfield Canoe Club.



be used for other purposes. That was it! we sat around at the next committee meeting with our heads in our hands and then I had a bright idea! If we could not build by the canal why not build on it?

Two months later we had done it!!! We gained permission from the sponsors for the change from land to water, found a mooring place, contacted a local narrow boat builder, had plans drawn and worked out all the

costing including running costs. So by the next committee meeting we had the complete package to put before the committee. For a smaller investment than a building we commissioned the building of a 63ft traditional style narrow boat, built to our own specifications, equipped for canoeing in all disciplines for all people, club members, Scouts, youth clubs, organised groups and Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. The boat

has canoe storage front and rear with a changing/club room in the centre with full wheel chair access, a small galley and will be capable of taking canoeing to the punters within reasonable touring range of the mooring. It is moored at Aldridge Marina on the Daw End Branch of the Wyrely & Essington Canal, this canal is already designated as the British Waterways Canoe Trail and is at the top of the Midlands canal system so the water is amazingly clean, the marina has toilets, showers and car parking. There are over forty lock free miles of canal available to us approximately four miles in the Southerly direction and thirty odd going North the canal has many small arms going off to what were collieries so there is plenty to explore. The boat was launched at the end of February and I was touched and honoured when the club flag fell off the bows and revealed the name "The Dhow" dedicated to me. A Dhow is a Middle Eastern working boat and comes in various sizes from as small as an open Canadian up to as big as a Chinese Junk. The official opening was in May at her first booking which will be at the Inland Waterways Association Festival at Pelsall over Spring bank Holiday weekend where we will be running the "Try Its" from the boat in conjunction with Waterways for Youth. This is entirely appropriate as she is a Narrow Boat and will, I feel be the star of the show being unique.



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# Trials and/or Trauma?

**F**or those of you near to the top of our sport Team Trials are probably around the corner. It was with this in mind, that I decided to put pen to paper and write a little about the psychological and emotional roller coaster an athlete can go through at Team Trials time. I hope for those of you who have not yet reached this level or have no intention of putting your body or mind through this trauma, it still makes for interesting reading. The views expressed are simply my own which have been formulated through the 15 years I have been racing at international level and the books I have read.

Mention Team Trials to any potential team member and almost instantly it will stir some form



of emotional reaction. For some, usually those of extreme self confidence in their own ability (normally built through regular success on the water) it manifests itself in excitement. They see it as another opportunity to show themselves and others who is the best. After all that's what competition is all about. For those few individuals and I stress few, as the majority of us don't experience uninterrupted success, self doubt doesn't enter the equation. Consequently, as long as the physical and technical elements of their performance is up to scratch, they will prove very hard to beat.

For the vast majority of others, it's a more complicated situation. For these, they have most likely experienced some success. Probably enough to build some self expectation and a perception of others expectations, but also experienced a degree of disappointment and failure too. This provides an interesting challenge. If the individual is in a positive frame of mind i.e. capturing the emotions of his/her previous success then his/her state of mind for racing will be good. So seeing the Trials as exciting, fun and an opportunity. However, as anyone who has put themselves under pressure to perform will know, be it in sport, business or any aspect of life those negative self doubts will start to creep in at some stage.

Hence the situation that 5 minutes ago seemed exciting and challenging suddenly seems scary,

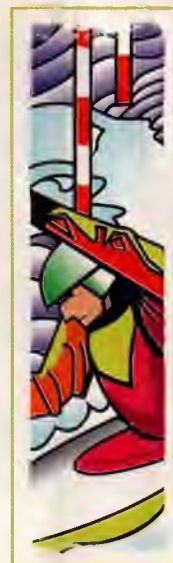
intimidating, threatening and the anxiety starts to grow. As luck may have it, this scenario is usually at its worst in the hours before the big occasion. Common reactions to this way of thinking may vary from being short tempered and irritable through to what the psychologists call the Possum syndrome. This is when the athlete shuts down in an attempt to control the alarm response that is happening within them. Unfortunately, this manifests itself in a severe lack of motivation to perform.

The true challenge for 99.9% of athletes whether it be at Team Trials or any major event, is not their competitors, but dealing with these negative self doubts and the destructive response they create.

I could go on and attempt to cover some of the techniques that have been established to control these responses, but apart from boring the majority of you to death there are plenty of psychology books that can do the job better than I.

However, to conclude, we've all heard the saying prevention is better than cure and from my own experience it is by far more effective to reframe those big challenges prior to the event, than to try and suppress the anxiety response at the event.

Ian Raspin



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# National Wild Water Racing Awards

In line with the BCU's Paddlesport development programme the Wild Water Racing Executive are planning to introduce a series of awards for Wild Water Races and Club Time Trials. Initially, these awards will be based on your race results for the rivers Tryweryn and Washburn. It is planned to introduce other race venues in the near future. Club time trials will also be included, once they have been registered with the National WWR Development Coach - Howard Blackman.

## How Do I Get Assessed At Races?

To get assessed at races please inform either Howard or the Wild Water Racing Secretary- Stuart Smith, prior to the race, that you wish to be assessed for an award and leave a large SAE (7"x9"). A certificate will be sent to you shortly after the race. Together with a discount voucher for Desperate Measures/Phoenix of Nottingham who have kindly sponsored these awards - Gold award earns 20% off goods, silver 15% off, Bronze 10% off. So don't hang around, have a go!

## How Do I Get Assessed at my Club Time Trial?

To gain assessment at your club time trial your club coach or secretary must first register the time trial with Howard, including an accurate measurement of the time trial and grade of water. Howard will then produce details for the awards. A full list of registered club time trials will be published in future editions of Wild Water World (to receive a copy contact Stuart Smith). Once your club time trial has been registered, complete the time trial, get your time recorded by either your club coach or secretary and send the details to Howard (including SAE 7"x9"). A certificate will be sent to you.

## Free Coaching - for Your Club

Wild Water racing is one of the most exciting, challenging and fun disciplines of canoeing. Whether you are a club with a racing background

or not I would be delighted to help you gain or further an interest in Wild Water Racing. I can offer coaching for K1, C1 and C2, videoing, access to Wavehoppers, Wild Water Skills, discover the racing line, suitable race venues and give help and advice on all aspects of WWR. Wild Water Racers are a friendly bunch of paddlers who are always happy to help newcomers into our sport. So come on, just give it a try, it may just get you hooked for life. Contact Howard Blackman, National Development Coach for WWR Tel: 01283 517375 or write to 18 Newton Road, Burton on Trent, Staffs DE15 0TX

## Wild Water Racing - World Championship Selection

Selection for the Team to represent Great Britain at the World Championships in Wild Water Racing took place at Garmisch Partenkirchen, Germany over the Easter Weekend. The successful paddlers selected are: MK1 - Ian Tordoff, Joel Wilson, Michael Mason and Jamie Christie. Ladies K1 - Tina Parsons, Cynthia Berry and Yael Chance. C1- Rob Pumphrey. C2-Dave Belbin and Phil Caunt, Iain and Andy Clough and Gordon and Terry Walling. Congratulations and good luck to all paddlers representing GB.


## New Secretary for Wild Water Racing

Stuart Smith has taken on the role as Secretary for Wild Water Racing, he can be contacted at 215 Bloomfield Road, Bath BA2 2AY Tel: 0410 012019

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Article by  
Ian Bowler

# Sea Kayaking off Vancouver

The prospect of paddling in the company of *Orcinus Orca*, "Killer Whales" had me tingling with excitement. Armed with a "map", definitely not a chart and after a quick steering and tippy test of our sea kayaks we engaged warp thrusters. Paddling leisurely across giant sea kelp we managed to dodge huge semi submerged logs.



Steady progress had been made, when from nowhere a sudden squall hit. I had a regular waterfall off the brim of my hat much to Caroline's amusement. Checking each others state of mind we agreed to head into Telegraph Cove. The whole landscape seemed on fire as billowing cloud and mist whipped up between the peaks and forests. A decision to go into the next entrance offering shelter was made whatever we found.

Johnstone Strait is a volatile piece of water separating Vancouver Island from the rest of British Columbia, notorious tidal races and whirlpools play havoc as the water moves between the fragmented islands. It now stretched out before us Fjord like, on fire as the mist rose.

#### Spellbound and speechless

Scanning the horizon in an effort to see the whales, ahead of us we spotted another kayak and we headed over for a chat. Easing off as we approached, I glanced around nervously, spellbound and speechless. Caroline and I looked at each other neither really aware of what we were about to experience. The double sea kayak still lay 20m ahead and they'd stopped paddling and were looking down towards Robson Bight. "Whoosh", yes, a huge dorsal fin off to our left. I twisted around glancing across at Caroline, from her expression she'd seen the same and was beaming

from ear to ear as we all drifted slowly into their oncoming path. "Whoosh, whoosh," now in quick succession. What's going on I thought, as I saw the Orca majestically glide, rise up and gently slip into the still water. I was a bundle of nerves. I never imagined we were in any danger of being capsized or eaten alive, it just didn't figure. "Whoosh, whoosh," from all around, three Orcas coming close to shore and the others stretching right across to the far shore. A truly awesome sight. Our three kayaks were drifting all over the place as we rounded a small headland and a current twirled us around. "Whoosh", this ones closing in fast I thought. Will it come in front, behind? No it surfaced again, I could see its beautiful markings, a black and white gleaming beauty and so majestic. Oh my, its coming between us. I can see it, there shimmering, "whoosh"! It surfaced less than two metres ahead of the double sea kayak. Glancing over my shoulder I spotted more Orcas 200 m away and I pondered which way they would be going. Caroline and I manoeuvred our kayaks to try and get a better view. Wow, a pair seemingly joined together gently broke the surface and re-entered leaving little trace. I felt totally gripped, intimidated and very insignificant. I was drawn like a magnet glued and transfixed by the experience. On reflection, it seems very strange as you'd



# Island

expect the survival instincts would be to get the hell out of there. In fact, all three kayakers held station almost knowing or foolishly believing themselves to be untouchable.

Venturing tentatively across to the double kayak to parlez and share further this once in a lifetime experience, it turned out we were in good company for the father of the young boy was a kayak guide and he complimented us on our behaviour with the whales. This intrigued me and he went on to describe kayakers paddling head on into a whales path, others actually try to chase them! I enquired as to what we should be doing in addition to not threaten the Orcas. I know it sounds daft, imagine any human being threatening to such a powerful animal,

but people are actually prosecuted for harassing Orcas! Top tip of the day was to have your kayak ready to launch, pointing out to clear water.

## Underwater cameras were on

Next day our trip took us out to view some of the nearby whale research stations past and present. Deciding to do a round trip and spend most of that day on the dry side of the strait, dry as in no fresh water supplies! Lunch was consumed in a slight drizzle sheltering under a huge flotsam roof at the tip of Cracroft Point. Perched at the tip of this island was a Whale research station and we scampered across the greasy rocks to investigate. The welcome was warm and cosmopolitan. Inside were volunteer staff from Japan, Germany, U.S.A.,

Canada and the UK glued to T.V. monitors and listening to microphones. Suddenly, alarms were activated and our hosts turfed us out onto the look out area. Binoculars came out and the "bible" a photographic description of each resident pod and the transients that pass through the area. They're all named and numbered and changes to these tight knit families are noted. The underwater cameras were on, the operator told us how they'd filmed the birth of an Orcas early on in the season and were hoping for more.

Following in the trail of the last pod we weaved between the tiny offshore islands that were peppered with trees and had a huge amount of bird life. Landing or attempting to land without getting crushed and bruised by the





flotsam on the shoreline was proving a nightmare. Once ashore we discovered scattered remnants of wooden shacks with personalised messages and numerous wooden carvings dotted about. Nature was slowly removing all trace of human evidence. From our vantage point we could see right across the straits and into the entrance of Robson Bight the Orcas reserve. Clouds had been building up and as we returned drops of rain fell. I decided to attempt to construct a shelter that was airy, had a good view and a roaring log fire. Caroline had the good sense to dive

into the tent and her warm sleeping bag. I don't know who was more surprised when I told her to come and try out the lean too. The only design fault was that the drying facility only had one setting, charred! Mamalilaculla, a deserted native village was our next intended destination, our route was to get across the straits, negotiate the dangers of Blakeney Passage and finally weave our way across the "Inner Sea". Mamalilaculla is the sight where the regions last Potlach took place

way back in 1921. A Potlach is the major native cultural event where tribal chiefs display their wealth by giving away everything! The event takes days to complete and involves a huge feast and extensive dancing and drinking. The British in their wisdom believed the Potlach to be destructive and made them illegal. Setting off across Johnstone Strait we crossed in front of the research station and glanced into Blakeney Passage. Intermittently it is dissected by tributary channels that rise and fall with the changing tides. According to our "map" and from what we'd been told this was the point of ferocious whirlpools and overfalls.

Our clue was to look out for the remains of a settlement and a wrecked ship on the shoreline. Not a sausage. Then it was there, we landed and armed with just our cameras we ventured away from the beach. Totem poles were the reason for my excitement. Just set back from the beach we stumbled into a small group of visitors who

pointed us in the right direction for the totems and warned us about bears. Whistling loudly and talking constantly to warn the critters of our presence we found some of the upright totems. They were barely standing, just rotting, surrounded and engulfed by brambles and thorn bushes. Lying on the ground unceremoniously was the remains of a 50 foot



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totem with some wicked markings. Caroline decided she wanted an aerial shot and commandeered a shoulder carry. What she got was a lot of winging as I staggered about, whilst Caroline tried in vain to focus. The noise we made certainly kept the bears away but we also amused a fellow visitor who fell about laughing.

Mamalilaculla was left to slumber on and we set off on our return to , well we had no plans. An awesome sunset seemed to be developing and foolishly we wandered right into it. Otters playing in the giant swathes of kelp had us both transfixed. Porpoises arced their way in between the channels and we chilled out again.

Caroline agreed to press on towards West Cracroft Island in search of a camp spot, the sun slowly dropped out of the sky. Next thing we knew we were at Cracroft Point home of the tidal rips. Crikey, I hadn't bargained for getting here tonight. A brief parlez and a decision to go through hugging the nearby shore was made with the proviso of landing as a matter of urgency. Progress was painfully slow, paddling yet getting no where. At last our aching limbs pulled us into an eddy. Pondering our

fate we looked across the straits and I mentioned the possibility of a 40 minute paddle to relative comfort. The sun had set, a campfire on the far shore was barely visible. All was going well until a "breeze" developed right on our beam. This coupled with a turning and running tide , we could be in real difficulty soon. I cursed our luck, offered some encouragement and was greeted with unmentionable expletives. Progress became non existent, I began questioning our decision and started posing alternatives as to what we should do next. Whoosh,whoosh! Oh my god, Orcas, they've come to see us off! Caroline paid little attention to my burlblings until I got my camera out and then I copped it! A pod of Orcas were seemingly all around. I was buzzing, weird, in the eerie fading light that they'd come out of their way to see us I mused. Caroline was not in the slightest bit interested in my burlblings.

Over breakfast the owners of the fire that had unknowingly guided us in came over to ponder, question and discover the wonders of "Night Navigation". "I've always fancied that " one muscled up Caroline handle that!!



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# Down River Japuni

After six years partaking in this wonderful sport, in this wonderful country I decided it was time to sample what other countries had to offer. Someplace that didn't have access problems, polluted water, wind, rain and snow.

**A**nyone that went to see, or competed in, the Bala World Championship in 1995 will remember, fondly, the rare time the Germans were given a good thrashing - by the Kiwis in the team event. The achievements of the New Zealanders that year was an inspiration to many, including my goodself. Eventually I saw the light, New Zealand was the place for me.

Thanks to the friendly nature of our sport Michael Mason and myself were able to contact members of the Kiwi team and arrange a place to stay and train for five months during the worst of the British winter (and, incidentally, the height of the New Zealand summer).

After several months hard work (no sponsorship in our sport) plane tickets were purchased and essential items packed (suncream, shorts and shades).

We planned to spend most of our time in New Plymouth, on the west coast of the North Island, and home to Wild Water Racing's world renowned Guru, Andrew Martin. This



was an ideal training venue. Four times World Champion Markus Gickler and World number 5 Kimmo Harikoski, from Finland would be other elite training partners.

## Legends of 'Down River'

Spending time with the legends of 'Down River', as it's known in NZ, was an interesting insight into the wide variety of characters that occupy the higher echelons of our great sport. Markus, at two meters three centimetres tall, is a larger than life figure with the personality to match. His volume of steady state training is matched only by his appetite for chocolate ice cream (a two litre tub in 5 minutes!). On the other hand Kimmo is a typically quiet Scandinavian who trains to a very complex programme set by his coach, who incidentally has never seen him race! Both paddlers have been training full time in warm countries for many years, fortunately for them sponsorship and support is not so difficult to come by from private companies, clubs and federations in their homelands.

Article and  
artwork by  
Mally Johnson





# DOWN



Mally Johnson paddling down under

After two months training in New Plymouth and paddling down the odd river when it rained - mainly enjoyable grade three's, it was time to venture down to the South Island where the New Zealand National Championships were to take place on the Buller River, in the North West of the South Island.

The South Island is full of wonderful mountains, glaciers, crystal clear rivers and sand flies! We spent the majority of our time paddling on the Buller River. The river flows from Lake Rotoiti, for 130 miles, down to the sea on the west coast and most of it is paddleable, ranging from technical, rocky grade three, to big powerful grade four sections. We managed to paddle many sections at varying water levels refining our technical skills and testing the durability of the Kiwi river bed against our superbly constructed (British made) kayaks. It was

during training on the river that we came into contact with the other Kiwi paddlers, some of which are ex-pats, and learnt some of the different philosophies on training and answers to the burning question on all DR paddler's minds; how do you get really fast? (and does the answer lie in the consumption of copious amounts of ice cream?)

The racing consisted of two 'Classic' races on the same day over the same testing course of approximately 4km. The highlight being the rapid 'Granity' where, after a flat lead in, all hell breaks loose round a right hand bend which includes a steep, intimidating, drop followed by a flat pool, which proved very handy for rescuing boats and paddles before swimming down the next rapid. Anyway about the racing...

In both races the World Champion showed his class by winning with a 20 second margin. The small group that

followed consisted of Kimmo, Andrew, Aaron Cox and Michael with Phil Dooney and my goodself a further 10-12 seconds back. The race for fourth place in the Kiwi team, for the World Champs was made even more nail biting with Craig Jones breaking out at Granity but managing to claw his way back into contention with an extremely fast finish eventually pushing Ant Roebuck into fifth (Kiwi) spot.

A sprint race followed on a different section of the river the next day with similar results although Aaron Cox squeezed out the foreigners, winning by half a second.

So having completed a month's quality rough water training it was time to return to New Plymouth to begin more speed work with selection for the World Champs looming only a few months away. It was now becoming clear that our hard training was beginning to pay off and that paddling in warm conditions (without having to also work a full day) is definitely an essential component of any elite athletes approach to his/her sport.

With the final week spent training in Auckland, alongside Olympic Champions Ferguson and McDonald, to round off our trip, it was time to reflect on our experience and see what lessons we could learn from this fine country and its inhabitants.

## Little funding

Having spent a summer in NZ it is possible to observe why the Kiwi paddlers have done so well in a European dominated sport. It's certainly not due to money, the members of the NZ team receive little funding (nearly as little as us!) and therefore have to hold down full time jobs whilst training. The explanation lies in the Kiwi lifestyle. 'Early to bed, early to rise' seems to be their motto, although this is mainly due to the nature of Kiwi TV: re-runs of Last of the Summer Wine, Coronation Street and Gardeners World don't encourage extensive late night viewing! Many get up early for a run/surf or if that's too strenuous, a brisk powerwalk. The serious paddlers are 100% dedicated to their objective, they train very hard, approach the European races very professionally, arriving to venues early and training in a very structured manner on the rivers. They are willing to share many of their views on training, even if it means that others will benefit from it. They also work together as a team when training on a river to seek out the fastest lines.

Perhaps we can learn from the New Zealanders. We certainly have the talent and depth to achieve World Class results and if we approach our sport in a similar 'full on' 100% way, we too can achieve success on a world level. With a little more sponsorship forthcoming we may achieve the level of success I have been dreaming about.

With participation in our friendly, challenging discipline slowly increasing and a new band of elite paddlers emerging the future looks bright.



# The Young Peoples Programme

## The Scheme

The Paddlepower scheme is now up and running. 6 workshops have been held and over 50 coaches have been accredited to run the schemes. We have already received some invaluable feedback from the coaches and tutors who run the workshop which will ensure that the package is as good as it can possibly be. As was mentioned in the last edition it is intended that the scheme will be available across the country by 1999.

### Here are some Frequently Asked Questions about the Scheme

#### 1. What does the Scheme consist of?

The scheme consists of 2 parts:

**Paddlepower 1** - Young Paddlers Scheme

**Paddlepower 2** - Challenge Logbook

Paddlepower 1 is primarily for the 7-11 age group and takes most of the key competencies contained with the One and Two Star schemes and presents them in smaller, child friendly steps. Consisting of 4 awards plus safety, capsize and water awareness awards, the child can take charge of their own progress and have each item checked off informally by the coach as they go along.

Paddlepower 2 is designed for the 11-15 age group and encourages young people to participate and continue beyond introductory sessions. Each of the 5 levels is designed as a CHALLENGE whereby points need to be gained through:

- Taking part in a number of coaching sessions in the club
- Trying out different boats
- Taking part in different events
- Helping out within activities in the club or centre
- Obtaining Star, Placid Water, Slalom or Paddlepower 1 awards

The logbook contains TOP TIPS from the best coaches and also key information on the many aspects of the sport.

#### 2. Can I phone the BCU and deliver the scheme straight away?

No. You need to attend the Paddlepower workshops before you can run the scheme

#### 3. Why do I have to attend a workshop before I deliver this scheme when I have been coaching for years?

The purpose of the workshop is primarily to explain in detail how the Schemes work. It also takes the opportunity to update coaches on the latest thinking on 'Working with Young People' - what they look for from their coaches and from the sessions they attend. There is a brief review on coaching efficient forward

paddling technique and a number of useful resource packs are also handed out during the workshop. Feedback to date indicates that the workshops have been very well received.

#### 4. Who do I contact to attend a workshop?

If your club, centre or organisation is within a Paddlesport Development Officer area please contact them directly as this is where the first pilots are running this year. As tutors are developed for the rest of the country a list of names and contact telephone numbers will appear in Canoe Focus at the end of the year. Everyone should have access to the workshops in 1999.



## Calling All Young Paddlers - Sizzling Summer Events...

There are more events than ever before happening for young paddlers this summer.

Contact either your Paddlesport Development Officer or your Regional Youth Rep to find out who's doing what and when.....Don't dare miss out on all of the action this summer.



### Paddlesport Development Officers:

Tyneside/ Sunderland -	Rory Corder -	0191 488 4398
Teesside -	Dave Hellawell -	01642 651661
West Yorks -	Michol Kendrick -	01484 460154
N.West -	Jonathon Davies -	01244 390451
Worcs/ Hereford -	Graham Campbell	01363 774841
Nottingham, Derby, Leicester -	Angela Hampton -	01162 674428
Berkshire -	Adrian Barker -	01189 267806
W. London -	Sue Hornby -	0181941 2714

The Paddlesport Officers also have lists of clubs & centres that welcome juniors and have junior sections so if you want to meet and have some fun with other young paddlers, get the list and go along!

### Regional Youth Reps.

Eastern Region -	Ian Richards-	01603 662917
East Midlands -	Emma Collins	
South -	Kevin Dennis -	01189 843162
South West -	Andy Squirrel -	01305 786005
West Midlands -	Chris Perry -	01299 402683

### New Paddlesport Development officer appointed

We are delighted to announce that Michol Kendrick has been appointed as the new PDO for West Yorkshire. She is an active member of the Pennine Canoe Club and has been involved in the sport for a number of years.





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E-Mail Address: [info@paddlesport.co.uk](mailto:info@paddlesport.co.uk)



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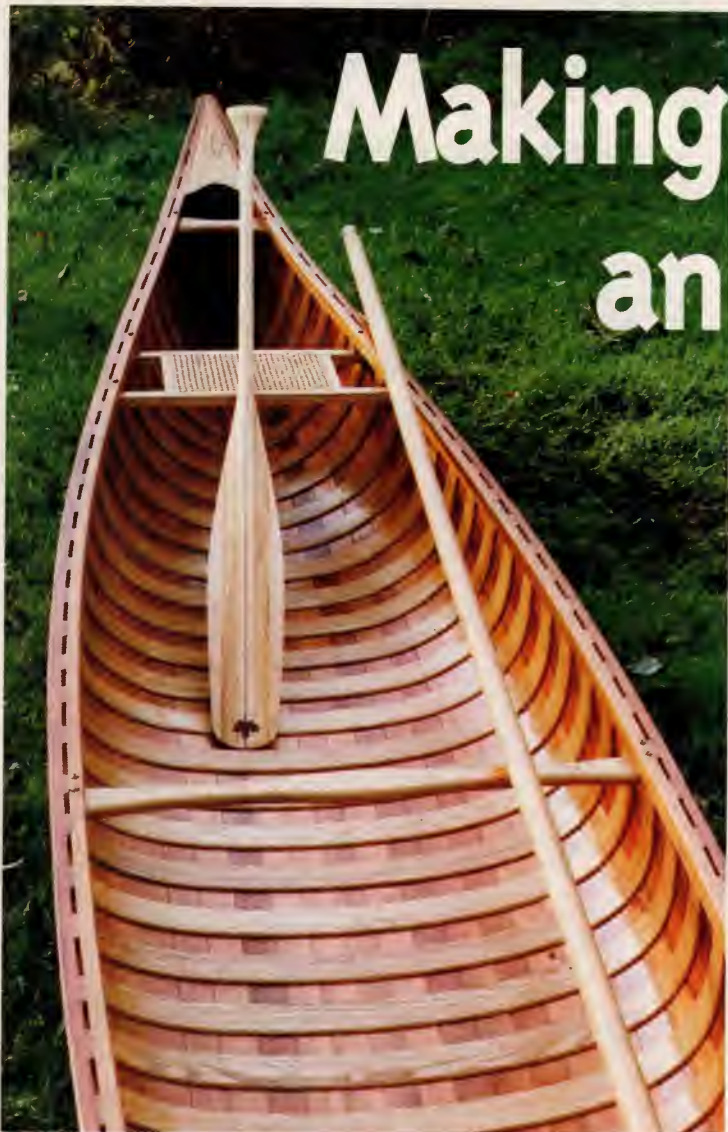
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# Algonquin-Style Paddle

by Graham Warren

**W**hen choosing an open canoe paddle, there is no need to be limited to the standard beavertail, ottertail and Sugar Island. The North American Indians certainly weren't, and various books and articles on these native people contain much inspiration for canoeists wanting to look beyond the commonplace paddle designs. Re-creating native paddles is a fascinating craft that is somewhat less demanding than re-creating their canoes, and with building times measured in hours, the lag between conception and trial is gratifyingly brief, with great opportunity to adapt and refine designs until you arrive at exactly the paddle that you want.

This particular design caught my eye in a photograph of some of Edwin Tappan Adney's model paddles that are now housed in the Mariner's Museum, Newport News, USA. Adney, an artist, was tireless in his pursuit of detail as can be seen from his classic book *The Bark Canoes and Skin Boats of North America*. He lived canoes. He passed his later years in a shack cluttered with books, model canoes and paddles, and notes from his years of research in the field. His book, littered with sketches and jottings, has the air of a project that was a race against time - documenting

fact, before the work was complete.

The Algonquin tribes lived (and still do) in what is now western Quebec and eastern Ontario. They had the reputation for being naturally good-humoured and were involved in the fur trade from an early stage. Their earlier canoes had distinctive high ends that were lowered on many later versions. Their connection with canoeing lives on in the name of Algonquin Park, which contains some of the most beautiful canoe routes in Canada.

#### Started life as a scan

My paddle started life as a scan of the original photo. Once in the computer, the outline was traced with CorelDRAW! and scaled to a typical native blade width of around 5". This resulted in an overall blade area of 125 sq. in., making the paddle a gentle thing compared with some contemporary beavertails that clock in at 150, or even 165 sq. in. To even out irregularities that crept in during the copying process, I superimposed the right and left

the canoes and paddles before the designs were gone for good. The book was also a personal race against time; Adney died, in

sides of the blade on the computer screen and split the difference. Once happy with the design, I printed out a full-size paper pattern. This pattern was used to make a template out of hardboard on which the curves were given a final fairing before the design was transferred to the wood. The original paddle in the photo had a bobble grip which I took the liberty of changing, although I have made such grips and

they have proved to be surprisingly comfortable in use.

I laminated the starting "blank" from ash, basswood, mahogany and maple, using resorcinol-formaldehyde glue (Cascophen). One-piece paddles have a simple elegance, but finding a suitable flawless piece of timber is not always easy. If laminating up the starting blank from strips, an excellent paddle can be constructed from wood that would never make a decent one-piece. Sloping grain can be reversed in strips either side of centre to virtually eliminate the risk of warping, and bookmatched grain in the blade is usually very effective.

For the shaft of this paddle I chose ash for strength, with a central core of mahogany for visual effect. Because the paddle was intended for touring, the strips were arranged side-to-side. Strips should be stacked in the stronger, but less attractive, front-to-back arrangement for whitewater or racing use. The



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blade has laminations of basswood for lightness (which also aids balancing the paddle), and the edge strips are of maple to exploit its toughness and abrasion resistance. The strips were chosen for quite subtle colour contrast; personally I dislike the blatant, "piano key" light/dark/light/dark strips on many commercial paddles. The figure of the wood was intensified by using spalted basswood strips in the blade, which have interesting darker streaks. I also incorporated a transverse internal lamination of glass fibre at the tip to minimise the risk of splitting.

The only tools really needed for shaping a paddle are a coping saw, smoothing plane and spokeshave, although I have to own up to using a band saw and belt sander as well. When you first dig into the starting plank, it can feel like the chances of it ever becoming a light and elegant paddle, rather than a misshapen embarrassment, are rather remote. In fact, with the aid of some simple tricks, and the use of templates for drawing in various carving guidelines, the process is relatively easy and good results can be had first time out.

On this paddle I made a slightly asymmetric grip because I like to flip the paddle from time to time on a long trip since the slight difference in shape gives a welcome change to the hands. I carved the grip down to about 1/4" at the neck to give appreciable flexibility in this region and so dampen out shocks transmitted up from the blade, giving more comfortable paddling. The grip is shaped with reference to side and top profile lines, added using flexible templates. I make these with the plastic from washing up liquid bottles, provided that I can get to the empty ones before the kids do.

The shaft on this paddle is tapered from elliptical at the throat to round below the grip. This saves some weight, gives a more elegant



look, and doesn't weaken the paddle because the wood is thickest where the strength is needed most. I prefer an elliptical section above the throat because it gives a more positive grip and you can sense the orientation of the paddle. The shaft is rounded by taking it from the initial square section first to 8-sided by chamfering off the corners at 45°, and then to 16-sided, again by taking off the corners. After this, sanding in a shoe-shining motion with a 2" wide strip of 60 grit paper rapidly produces a smooth shaft.

The side face of the blade is marked out with a pair of lines indicating the final edge thickness. Choosing the blade edge thickness is a compromise: thinner edges slice more cleanly through the water and make submerged recovery strokes much easier, but they also chip more easily. A thickness of 3/32" seems about right for general use. The throat (transition from blade to shaft) is shaped using carving reference lines, again added using a flexible template.

Ideally, a paddle should balance more or less at the lower grip region. The sense of poise and lightness you get with a balanced paddle is startling if you have only previously used poorly balanced ones. Sugar Island-type paddles are relatively easy to balance, but paddles with long blades, such as the Algonquin, are more

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difficult, especially if made in conjunction with a short shaft. It is usually possible to achieve the desired balance by laminating into the blade strips of a light wood such as basswood. For my Algonquin paddle, I guessed at 1" wide for the strips of basswood in the blade and it ended up balancing about right. The final weight of the paddle was about 28oz (800g).



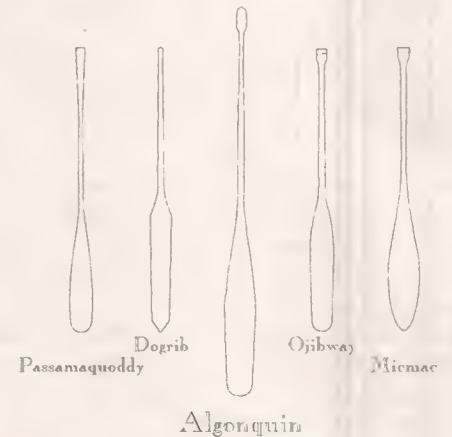
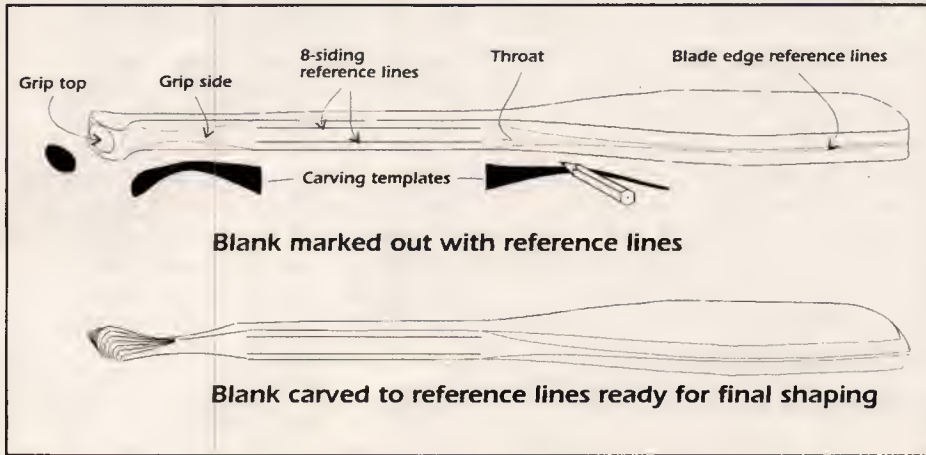
and gives the paddle a pleasant, soft feel in the hands. It also makes it extremely easy to touch up scratches and scrapes.

I like this paddle. It works well with a light touch and a rapid stroke rate. It rolls easily in the water for steering, gives reasonable thrust and digs in deep, down to where the solid water is. It is, however, definitely not for shallows. Above all, using it makes me feel good, skimming along, sensing the antiquity of the design, immersed in thoughts of another place and another time.





Full instructions on making paddles, and a range of paddle designs can be found in the author's book **Making Canoe Paddles in Wood** available from him at **Moosehead Canoes, 23, Broomhill Road, Old Whittington, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, S41 9DB. 01246-454541.**



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Article by  
Viktoria  
Schneider



I arrived at the Thames Weir Rodeo in Hurley Village, near Maidenhead early on Saturday 21st March. This annual event is the first ranking event of the UK Rodeo calendar.

The day began with two rodeo training sessions for newcomers, giving them a

chance to check out the water conditions and learn some new moves. As one of the official event photographers, I was given a bright orange vest with a big letter 'M' on it, which guaranteed privileged access to the area of the bridge straight above the weir. Unfortunately, viewing space for the spectators on the weir walkway is limited due to the Environment Agency regulations, but there are a few good spots where the viewing was excellent for persistent rodeo watchers.

The first event was the 'Novice' event, where the term novice refers to anyone who has not previously made it through their heat in the 'open class' of a ranking event. There were lots of new faces, including Tony McSpadden, who was to rank first out of the six heats of keen novices. Competitors were divided into heats consisting of approximately 8 people, with each paddler having two runs of 45 seconds each. Two technical judges and one style judge ensured that the new BCU scoring system, which is intended to take more account of variety, was correctly implemented. Six compulsory moves were announced at the briefing, of which each competitor had to perform at least four during their run in order to gain maximum points.

For every move

# Some Like 13th Thames Weir Rodeo

less than four standard moves performed, 25% of the technical and style scores were deducted. Top scores were awarded to the paddlers who concentrated on performing the set moves.

The next event, was the junior event. As I watched these very young paddlers (some as young as 12 years old) throwing themselves into the fierce waters of the weir without a trace of fear, I couldn't help being impressed. Having had the pleasure of Hurley Weir myself recently (an experience which made me grasp the concept of fear more clearly than ever before), I was amazed at the level of control and flexibility some of the juniors were displaying. The eventual winner was Alex Scovell, with a couple of very impressive runs.

The final three events of the day - squirt, open canoe and decked C1 - presented interesting alternatives to the conventional float boat event and kept the crowds entertained until the light began to fade. Finally, shortly before 7pm, the Duo Fun Event took place to complete the Saturday Hurley experience. Impatiently awaiting the nod of the judges, seven teams lined up on the adjacent river bank ready for a Le Mans style start. As soon as the signal was given, Shaun Baker and Louise Wigmore, who had been seen secretly training for this event, raced towards the weir closely followed by Simon Holt and Emma Wood and a whole host of other wacky boaters. All seven boats made a frenzied attempt to be the first to surf the wave and chaos ensued. Besides the enthusiasm of the paddlers and the cheerful comments of the viewers, it all resulted in crashing boats and buoyant ends. After this lively outburst of canoeing activity the evening was rounded up

with a get together in the East Arms Pub where the BCU Rodeo Committee AGM kicked off an evening of drinking and partying.

## Less familiar face

The next morning paddlers were content to find Hurley at an ideal level of two gates again and most of the female paddlers were preparing themselves for their event. Contrary to the last few Hurley rodeos, where Helen Taylor (better known as HT) had been winning convincingly, this time there was a less familiar face in the winning seat. By performing a succession of impressive cartwheels, Deb Pinniger managed to score top points, securing her first place, closely followed by a slightly surprised HT in second. Likewise, the men's float boat event revealed some surprising outcomes. Paddling at a higher level than the preceding events in the rodeo, top



## Thanks

Event organisers, Heather Gunn and Shaun Baker would like to thank the sponsors, Teva, YAK, Sector, Redashe Ltd and Playboater for supporting the event, and the Environment Agency and Brian Webb for making the event possible. Also, the helpers, Anna Wilson, Katie Aiscott, Carolyn Gale, Mark Appleton, Simon Edwards, Helen Smith, Hippy Dave, Simon Hill and Chris Taudevin, for their invaluable efforts over the weekend.



Shaun Baker  
2nd overall

# It Hot



Andy Phillips

paddlers rendered quality performance and did not fail to make an impression on the large spectator crowd. Competing canoeists were keen to perform the four essential moves out of a range of six set moves, these being a controlled surf, back surf, 360 degree flat spin, retentive end, cartwheel and a splitwheel. In order to be followed by other highly skilled moves, such as various cartwheels, splitwheels and even airwheels to exit the hole. Among a considerable

number of twelve heats, Simon Westgarth succeeded in working his way up to the finals with particularly highly scoring runs, managing to snatch the desired first place. He was closely followed by Shaun Baker and Jonny Pearson and this event proved to be the highlight of a good weekend.

Prize giving was held and the winners were congratulated and given prizes kindly donated by Teva, YAK, Sector Sport Watches, Playboater

and Redashe Ltd. A special presentation was made to Brian Webb, the Hurley Lock Keeper who has been instrumental in securing Hurley as a top paddling site. He was presented with a Sector Sport watch.



## Results

### Main Event

- 1 Simon Westgarth.
- 2 Shaun Baker
- 3 Jonny Pearson

### Ladies K1

- 1 Deb Pinniger
- 2 Helen Taylor
- 3 Lara Tipper

### Novice

- 1 Tony Mc Spadden
- 2 Ed Hopper
- 3 Mark Allen

### Junior

- 1 Alex Scovell
- 2 Andy Macdonald
- 3 Martin Tapley

### Men's Squirt

- 1 Bob Campbell
- 2 Chris Taudevin
- 3 Andy Round

### Ladies Squirt

- 1 Louise Wigmore
- 2 Hazel Wilson
- 3 Lynsey Evans

### Decked C1

- 1 George Woods
- 2 Cheesy
- 3 Chris Harrison

### Open Canoe

- 1 Pete Orton
- 2 Neil Thompson
- 3 Rob Dixon

Helen Taylor



Hurley Weir



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**Pyranha Master**, yellow, ww spec, air bags £175 ono. Prijon Canyon, yellow, airbags £175 ono Tel: John 01535 633047

**Pyranha Mountain Bat** £195 ono. 2 plastic 'Punchers' similar to Europa, ideal for general purpose paddling or new starter,

both kayaks include paddle, spraydeck and b/aids £80 each. Tel: Rugby 01788 812941 or e-mail Dave@dbass.ftech.co.uk

**Pyranha Stumbat** aquamarine, full ww spec, full plate footrest, airbags, back strap, excellent condition £270 Tel: Rebecca 0181 304 1814 (Kent) after 7pm or ansaphone 0802 401967

**Raider Wedge 7'6"** beginner/intermediate waveski with powerpad seat, fins and belt, vgc £149. Ainsworth K106 spec 2 paddle vgc £29 Tel: 01525 371972

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**Reflex Barcelona** Slalom K1, kevlar carbon construction. Good condition £200 Contact Ian on 01792 424 339 Swansea

**Rotobat** full ww spec, good condition £175. Can meet at Holme Pierrepont or Matlock Call 01773 819155 for more info.

**Sea Kayak** Sea King 17ft with orange and black trim, 2 very large hatches fore and aft. Full declines and pump, knees and thigh pads, rockered hull combined with effortless straight running. Adjustable footrest. A fast boat with high performance, superb condition with trolley, detachable wheels, eye-catching boat, sensible offers. Also Creek 280, red, excellent condition with backstrap, knee and thigh pads, neoprene spraydeck, also Schlegel Tech II Topline paddles, playboater £350. Also Slalom Nomad K1, yellow and white, epoxy kevlar/carbon with spraydeck and Nomad carbon paddles £150. Tel: David 01923 285401 Chorleywood, Herts.

**Slalom fibreglass canoe** suit child/slim female. Good condition £80 Tel: Philippa 0181 948 8216

**Snipe** fibreglass, general purpose kayak, 4m long, as new, yellow/black deck, inc paddle and spraydeck £150 Tel: 01785 245982 (Stafford)

**Stunt 300** aquamarine, brill condition, full ww spec, complete with hip pads, backrest and YAK spraydeck £270 Tel: 01257 415790 Chorley/Preston.

**Summer Calls**, try a sea kayak for size. P6H Capella, sky blue, plastic, for sale. Includes compass, pump & paddles, hardly used - too far inland! £450 the lot, Taunton 01823 277724.

**Topolino Spud** green, good condition, Winsworth paddles, Crewaver b/aid, River Runner spraydeck, Palm cag, Palm dry trousers, sleeveless wet suit, helmet, Nike wet shoes, roof rack to fit most cars, will not split £495 ovno Tel: 01932 847342 Surrey

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**Trojan 8 berth** open canoe trailer, vgc £950 ono. Also 4 Discovery 174 open canoes, VGC £350 ono. Tel: 01482 640 422

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**Wanted/Swap**

**Canadian Canoe** required, 2 person, Royalex construction, Old Town, Pyranha or similar please phone Swansea 01792 390787 eves

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**Pintail Sea Canoe** must be in good condition Tel: 01453 543010

**Sea Kayak** reasonable condition, contact Doug 01704 541960 or 01942 761578 (NW)

**Lost, Found, Stolen**

**Found** On Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> March I found a Ras Dex spray deck in a car park in Ambleside. It has a name inside it, so if someone can tell me the name I will arrange to return it to them. Tel: 01943 878157 which can go in the advert, my work no is 01274 375687.

**Lost on River Gloy** (the gorge section above the road bridge) Scotland, 26<sup>th</sup> March 1998. A set of Gorilla Rodeo X paddles with semi-carbon shaft. All Black as stickers were taken off blades. Right handed with a 60 degree feather. Approx 196cm in length. Quite distinctive due to the surf wax on the shaft. May still be on the Gloy or even in Loch Lochy. Any info please phone Chris 0973 442601 (Notts)

**Lost on the River Dart**, loop section, Friday 20<sup>th</sup> Feb 98, left handed Schlegel TIII all round extreme paddle (pink blades). Tel: Ray 01494 543170 day 01494 791982 eve or Mick 01494 791134 eve.

**Stolen** from Llangollen YHA, Creek 280 and Micro bat, both purple Call 01978 860330/869389 or police with any info.

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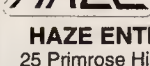
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Such an enjoyable  
venture that it had  
been worth repeating - only with the  
best company, mind.

How many times, as you travel places, do you find yourself checking out that stretch of water, running your way, along the same valley? That was certainly so in this case, a well trodden highway on the way north. In dry conditions glimpses of a bouldery river bed, a tight drop, and was that a branch across down there? Murphy's Law prevails - when the sea boat is on the roof and the Scottish West Coast is the destination, or heading for the mountains with a rucksack, ice axe and perhaps the wrong set of friends the river can be relied upon to be in perfect condition winking at you as you speed North. With each subsequent passage along the route a little more is glimpsed as your neck, and those of everyone you travel with, is strained to make out every detail. Summer time, winter time,

hidden with foliage or  
exposed through  
naked trees  
more



shows and the picture builds. Isn't there something wonderfully exciting about the anticipation of what it would be like to stop the motor and try it? Or is it simply better to travel...

No guide book references to this tributary, thank goodness. This could be the first descent in the making - as if it really mattered. No-one has branded it a grade blobbity blob or listed the rapids and the problems, given the warnings of where inspection is needed. If its do-able then you do it on your own terms and make your own decisions - great! And, as a consequence there's no queue of groups lined up to tick it off a list of conquests.

Over countless journeys North through the Borders and the Southern Uplands this little tributary beckoned. Chance never favoured us with the right boat, the time and the right company but still it twinkled and winked at us on the journey North. Funny that it never took such a hold during the journey South, tired and satiated through other endeavours, but then again there's nowhere near as good a view as from the Northbound carriageway! This kind of tap dripping urge builds up and warrants a stop one day to discover that the part unseen from the road would, in fact, take a kayak but we are talking small waters. Small yet perfectly formed with some wonderful and challenging features. Nothing to dissuade but plenty to add to an urge... and so it was, when the rains came again and seemed to be landing in the right place, in suitable dollops, the urge for a little exploration beckoned. It needed the twitch of under stretched paddling muscles and the promise of exercise for those chuckle muscles to get Doug on the road early of a Sunday morning but the prospect of an outing on Scottish water works the same magic as

Stranraer winning away.

At the get in the anticipation rises, not that the water is that serious, but it is flowing fast and the banks are hellishly overgrown - about grade four for vegetation. Its not so much the difficulty of the water as the prospect for barbed wire or the unexpected round the corner which keeps you alert and focussed - love it! As it is the Evan Water proves to be a delight - a couple of inspections and some satisfying and challenging moves and drops a combination which keeps us engrossed, never too much nor letting up much either. A wonderful celebration of upland waters, of liverwort clad rockwork in breakout pools waiting for each other on the way. At one point I remember looking back upstream to that foreshortened stacking of small drops of water flowing in so many directions. We slipped by back doors and transport café and nearly toppled off the top of a shark fin wave around a gorge wall.

This youthful water eventually joins with others to form the Annan and heads for the Solway but that's another day out altogether. For us it was as good to arrive as it had been to do the travelling and an adventure worth savouring, one to come back to... except.

Except that to speed us North even faster we can now enjoy an upgraded A74 and with the coming of motorway status the Evan water can now be seen disappearing into culverts, being channelled and straightened with an artificial bed and gabions to restrain. The journey north is a blighted one now, with a sad sense of the loss of this spirited little gem. There is no difficulty seeing what its about now and no urge to have a closer look, to stop the car and off load the boat. No trees on sections to obscure or quicken the pulse and who but the dippers and us paddlers will mourn its passing?



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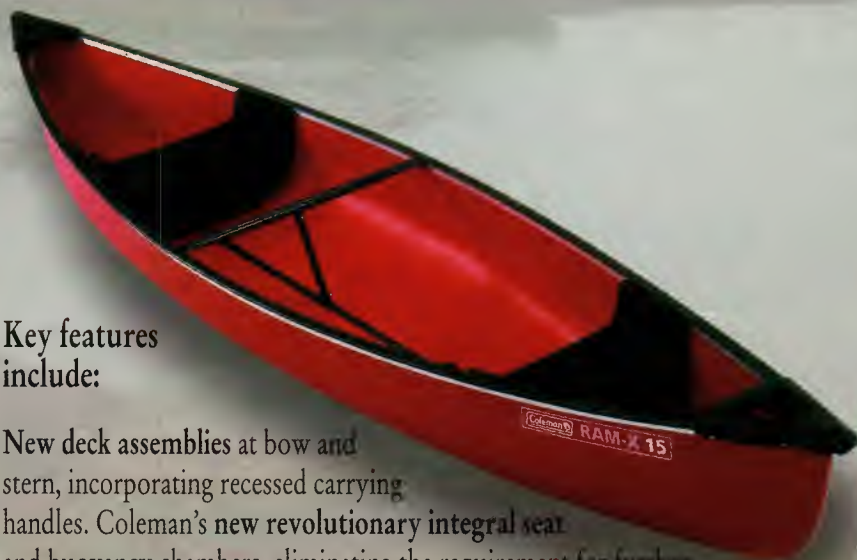
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Article by  
Ian Bowler

# In Search of FireWater

or Best Before July 1993

Leaving more junk in the cars than in the kayaks we departed late afternoon aiming to camp on Scarba. Our masterplan was to then use the Great Race to be propelled at warp speed towards the Garvellachs and Mull. As the race eased we'd be in control and be able to head off S.W. towards Colonsay. No problemo, Colonsay was a mere snippet away, O.K., 16 odd miles of open ocean!

**B**rigit and Giles were keen as mustard and the glorious sunshine saw us on our way. Scarba gradually came closer and we hugged its shore. Directly in our path was a swirling mass dissected by glassy seemingly still areas. Beyond, lay Corryreckan and our intended campsite. Darting into the current we were swept sideways and along this way and that. The headland was shimmering and we decided to go forth. Powering out into the current drained me and I searched for another collection point to regroup. Brigit and Giles followed on and joined me out of breath, looking all rosy! "There's more where that came from I mused." Brigit blurted out that she was "game" and onwards we pushed. It was uncanny and unnerving as we rounded promontories to ease up and be sucked back into the current. My

throat was parched from the exertion, all of about 20 minutes!

Next day calm, sparkling waters greeted us and we scanned around searching for signs of movement in the early afternoon sun. "Dolphins", Brigit shouted. Manoeuvring and trying to catch a glimpse I reached for my camera. Yep, close in on the Jura side were a small group of three possibly four, what a buzz! I questioned if in fact they were porpoises as they came for a closer inspection of our kayaks. I'm easily entertained and lost track of our swirling position between Scarba and Jura. Sea gulls close to the Scarba shore alerted me to the changing currents. I took a quick transit to check who was moving me or them and called the others to check my visuals. A raging torrent greeted us hugging Scarba's shore. Decision time, do we get on now, later or never? Pondering can take some time and in our position we had little. I shared my two "escape routes" with Giles and Brigit

and we jumped on the ride. Scarba was left behind and Mull became clearer but it didn't last as the stream waned and we realised we'd jumped on too early. Readjusting our plan we altered our route, readjusted our sun hats and headed for Colonsay. "Whales Ahoy", Giles screamed. I struggled to pin point what he'd seen. I gasped as I saw a huge plume of water appear and a dark shape submerge. Maybe its a reef or an isolated rock, my next thought was if it is what we think it is, which way is it headed! What a show, porpoises, whales, whatever next? Progress was painfully slow. The Paps of Jura, or rather a Pap then another gradually came into view. Our faces were being burnt by the sun and the gathering headwind. Puffins buzzed us, which lifted my spirits fleetingly as they did a fly past, circled and dived in close to our kayaks to watch and gloat. The wind gathered. And waves constantly crashed over my bow. Plans to head





around to Kiloran Bay were aborted as we fancied a rest.

Giles was the first to land, disturbing the in situ cormorants, on the glittering white sands of Colonsay after a four and a half hour crossing. I received an ear bashing for too little coaching too late but that's still being hotly disputed over a wee dram or two! After a scrumptious meal Giles and I gave my kite its maiden flight. Success eluded us, it sank repeatedly into the deep sand and our antics had Brigit in stitches.

Next morning, Western Colonsay beckoned and after a buffeting from the wind our decision was to inspect if we could from Meall a Chuilbh the northern extremity of Colonsay. Atop our view was clear, windswept and stormy. Vast amounts of storm debris clogged up the rocky inlets and the white capping waves looked ferocious in the sunshine. A decision to poke our noses around the headland was taken. Spectacular jagged rocks awash with fierce waves and festooned with rasta seaweed greeted us. Our game plan changed again due to the swell and unpredictable waves. Skirting the headland we turned so the wind was almost astern. Jagged headlands greeted us with wee islands pounded by the ferocious waves. Big, bouncy waves pummelled us as we made slow progress south. Giles and Brigit disappeared on a regular basis in the crests and troughs. After ten minutes of this on our beam we convened behind a rock, and checked on each others state of mind. Kiloran Bay was to be our goal and a decision would have to be taken whether to retreat, push on or in deed sit it out.

### Spellbound by an otter

Kiloran Bay was a wonderful haven. Nutritious reserves were ravenously consumed. R and R over we decided on sticking our noses out or should that read necks! Hence forth there was to be no shelter, rest stops as cliffs over 120 feet high greeted us and their inhabitants went berserk. Vast numbers of birds dived bombed us, some simply sat at the edge of my paddle and others submerged as I mowed them down. The kamikaze spectacle lasted half an hour or so and it took my mind off the troubled waters we were in. Shoals and rocks littered the rest of the western coast causing us to zig zag or was that the surf waves! As we reached the S.W. tip things eased and the wind shifted behind. Brief respite occurred as we landed on a beach and discussed the possibility of an overnight stop. 'Twas certainly spectacular but the ferocious wind didn't get my vote. The tide was coming in and we used the rising water to weave between the nearby rocky ledges and islands. It was like an inland sea, fairly sheltered from the wind and waves and full of seals, eider ducks and herons. Numerous groundings occurred as we headed for Oronsay. Rounding a corner, I glanced seaward to be left spellbound by an otter. It had hauled itself onto a sea weed laden rock. I waved gingerly at the others. The otter turned towards us, clocked our observations and dived into the water. I'd seen otters swimming but never on land and Brigit and Giles were equally blown away. Our day ended on the

S.W. tip of Colonsay with a stunning view across to Oronsay and the Paps of Jura.

Next day the tides forced us to depart around midday to get through The Strand, no, not Monopoly ya idiot, 'tis a tidal causeway that joins Oronsay to Colonsay. Seals bobbed up as we swerved between the low lying islands heading for the open sea. Dazzling sunshine hindered our navigation and we scanned the way ahead for a gap to lead us to open sea. Deserted white beaches greeted us and we made plans and prepared to cross to Islay. Aiming high to Shian Bay on Jura we re-adjusted our goal and ended up at Rubha a Mhail lighthouse on Islay. Glorious sunshine, stupendous views, a gentle breeze to end with and rather interesting currents for the finale. Views back to Oronsay and Colonsay were fantastic and numerous refreshment stops were taken for the sake of a few photo opportunities. Camp was established on the helipad that had been built on the raised beach. Exploration saw us discover caves, arches high above the present waterline and Giles had a run in with some of the local deer.

An early morning misty foray down the Sound of Islay found us in 25 m visibility. As its a short cut for fishing boats we hugged the shore and kept our eyes and ears peeled. The summits of the paps cleared and more importantly the Bunnahabhain Distillery came into view. Purchases were made and we sped past the wreck almost bouncing off its rusty hulk.

currents started playing tricks, now which way are we going and which way is it going.

Transits were taken and my concerns were ignored, so I sulked and got out my Kendal Mint Cake. Giles discovered its maturation was best before July 1993!!

### Thermal heated rocks

Our final sunset close to Carsaig Bay preceded by a display by otters was simply awesome. Thermal heated rocks, allowed us to sit and admire the views across the sound as the sun began its blinding descent behind Jura's peaks.

I'd heard of "Dorus Mor" but what greeted us next morning was both spectacular and daunting. Unwittingly we were drawn into the jaws of Dorus Mor. A line of standing waves, surf waves, jets and bubbling whirlpools hypnotised us. Keeping together became impossible. Searching ahead for eddies near the islands became a priority. Banter flowed, concerns echoed. Gaining a birds eye view from one of the islands we surveyed our intended path. Crikey, I swallowed hard and my throat became dry. Ahead lay a mass of powerful swirling currents and jets. The daunting part were the changes of direction that we'd observed whilst atop of our vantage point. Back on the water we aimed to cross as quickly as possible and I sensed the determination and realisation of our task. Seals came to say farewell or did they know something we didn't. A very, very



We very gingerly left Craighouse. A lone seal from the A.S.S. ( airborne seal squadron) chased us from Lowlandmans Bay and had us splitting our sides at its crazy antics of cat and mouse! Jura Sound beckoned and we crossed it from Lagg Bay heading up to Crinan. Weird

late lunch was taken staring back in stony silence watching Dorus Mor and Corryvreckan tear and roar at each other mixing it like fearsome warriors.

Two days later I found myself "awash again" off Cape Wrath!





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## New Paddle Range from Ainsworth

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Photo: Anders Blomqvist Paddler: Simon Westgarth boofin' Ulla Fossen at the Sjøa Kajak Festival, Norway 1997

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