

# Canoeing

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VOL 3 NUMBER 1 DECEMBER 1962



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# Canoeing

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## EDITORIALLY SPEAKING

We cannot but rejoice at the news given by Rodney Baker, Hon. Secretary of the B.C.U., in his letter in this issue which announces that the B.C.U. Council will put before the next A.G.M. sweeping changes in the membership structure of the Union. Briefly, all clubs will pay a small standard affiliation fee, and individuals if they wish to take advantage of the many facilities available from the Union will have to pay a separate subscription which is to be the same as the present per capita fee, i.e. 7s. 6d.

This means in effect that membership of the Union is placed well within the reach of those people who need it most, e.g. small and young clubs, and individuals. This will be particularly advantageous to schools and youth clubs where canoeing is only one of many activities, and where the previous system has demanded too high a proportion of a general subscription.

As readers will know, we have long advocated a 'fairer deal' for the individual, and the new scheme provides this. We believe, also, that in taking a further step in altering the basis of club affiliation British canoeing will emerge all the stronger. Our only reservation is as to whether the scheme would have been better if it had been carried out in two phases separated by a period of time. As it is, the Council are taking a calculated risk that the increase of income from one source will balance the drop in income from the other. However, if existing members give their support this risk should be an extremely small one.

# DESCENSO INTERNACIONAL DEL SELLA

By M.Harding and M.Tapscott

(J.L.U.R.E.M.E. C.C.)

It was just after 10.30 a.m. on Saturday, 4th August 1962, and the sound of the starter's gun was drowned in a thunder of background noise, from locomotive whistles, a cheering crowd, and an over-excited commentator, and the twenty sixth descent of the River Sella began.

Over a hundred competitors paddled furiously for the first rapid, some ran aground, some completed a circle, some just stopped waiting for the jam to disperse, whilst we, to our astonishment found ourselves going the right way reasonably quickly right through the middle. The start of the Sella River Race is an experience and it is probably best to describe it as just that, a good start is a big advantage whilst a bad one may be disastrous.

This year Great Britain was represented by V.Handscombe and A.Chapman of Royal Canoe Club who did well to finish tenth in the K.2 class after a bad start, which also involved a damaged rudder. We went along for the experience and thoroughly enjoyed it.

Like many sporting events the Sella River Race began in a small way, in fact, a pleasure cruise by a few Spanish enthusiasts, very soon it had developed into a race, initially on a local scale then Nationally and finally Internationally with competitors travelling from as far as the United States of America and Finland.

The race starts at the village of Arriondas and finishes some 12 miles (19 kms.) downstream at the small port of Ribadesella, about halfway along the North coast of Spain. The course is an interesting one for a Long Distance Race involving many minor rapids with one of two awkward ones, that is awkward as far as a K.2 is concerned. The river twists and turns through some magnificent scenery running through a fairly deep gorge for some of the way, before being held back by a weir at Llovio (portage). From here to the finish it is tidal and a few rapids are exposed at low water. This year the water level was extremely low and many shallows were encountered, some of which meant getting out and running to deeper water, unfortunately the tide was also out and there was no deep water until shortly before the finish.



Start at Arriondas



British Contingent 1962. 1 to r. A.Chapman, V.Handscombe,  
M.Harding, M.Tapscott.

Perhaps the most notable feature of this race is the start. Due to the large number of entries and the limited space available, starting positions are drawn for (about a week before the event) and positions are staked out on both banks above and below the bridge at Arriondas. Only K.1's and K.2's start at the bridge, the former starting in the downstream position. The official starting position for K.2's is for the bow paddler to be sitting in the canoe whilst the rear paddler may either stand astride or to one side. The actual start is preceded by a long ritual, including a chaotic procession through the village followed by a cry of "to the boats". There follows a lengthy speech ending with the playing of each Nation's National Anthem, by this time considerable creeping of the back markers has begun and soon becomes infectious, the majority then start, and the starter fires the gun! Two crews were actually disqualified this year for jumping the start and it is proposed to incorporate a count down in future after a warning in different languages that the start is due in a specific time.

About eighty yards from the start the river bottlenecks into a Grade I-II rapid followed by another, the chaos that can result is best left to the imagination. At the finish on the bridge at Ribadesella the control closes thirty minutes after the arrival of the first canoe, all crews finishing within this margin qualify as finishers. This system is very disappointing to the many crews who do not finish within this time as they have no idea of where they were placed. A suggestion has been put forward that the control remains open for an hour in order to complete a more comprehensive result sheet, though only those finishing within thirty minutes of the winners' time will qualify. It is hoped that this will be in force next year.

The course is interesting from two aspects, the water, and the other competitors, In one rapid about halfway down the course the channel is hard to find and some quite large rocks jut up at random right across the river. We arrived to find a K.2 in two pieces with the crew frantically trying to salvage the remains so as to clear the channel. Further on the river flows swiftly into the right hand bank under some trees. One crew had come to grief here and their canoe was half submerged with the bow rising a few feet from the water like a surfacing submarine. We witnessed a head on collision between the chest of the front paddler of another crew and this submarine, knocking him clean out of his seat into the water, much to the amusement of some spectators.

The race is the focal point of a Festival of Canoeing (Fiesta De La Piraguas) and attracts thousands of spectators, consequently one is cheered along the whole length of the course. A single track railway line follows the river for most of the way and a special festival train packed with supporters grinds its way down the valley stopping frequently to let the occupants view the course, then with a blast from its siren-like whistle it jogs on down the line. The bridge at the finish is a solid mass of people, a truly welcome sight to a weary paddler, seldom if ever seen over here.

The hospitality given to visiting crews is on a generous scale and no one need feel left out of it. All accommodation and food for a period of four days prior to the race is free and there is some form of entertainment every night. Upon arrival on the Wednesday we were informed that there was to be a dance that night at the Residence where all foreign crews were staying, starting about midnight. The next evening everyone was invited to a cider tasting ceremony at a mariners' chapel on a hill overlooking the harbour entrance. On Friday there was another dance, at the village of Arriondas, and of course Saturday was Fiesta day.

Meal times can be a little upsetting with breakfast or rather coffee and rolls around 9 a.m., a long wait to lunch at 2.30 p.m. and the evening meal at about 9.30 p.m. The food was good and there was plenty of it. On the morning of the race the start was too early to obtain breakfast beforehand so we had to provide for ourselves. There are many other interesting and entertaining aspects to ones visit which are too numerous to mention here and one must be careful not to over do it.

The organisers will provide a K.2 of local pattern so long as advance notice is given; these craft were complete with seats and rudder which though a little crude were nevertheless functional. These canoes are rather flat bottomed but this is probably an advantage on this course. Remember to take your own paddles. The course is hard on canoes so be careful when practising and keep the boat reasonably sound for the day. Difficulties may be experienced by those without transport of their own, when it comes to practising over the course. The ideal is a third person with a car who can act as manager.



Chapman & Handscombe portaging at Ulovio (the only portage).

# AN UNUSUAL WAY TO THE BOAT SHOW

By SGT. H. BOSTOCK

On Thursday, 4th January 1962, a conversation took place between myself and the Fighter Command Physical Fitness Officer. I and a party of colleagues at R.A.F. Leconfield wanted to go to the Boat Show and we wanted to know if we could get tickets and reduced travel rates to London. The P.F.O. stated "Why not canoe down?" and that is how, on the following Tuesday, we found ourselves aboard a lorry destined for Leicester.

Inquiry had been made through friends in Leicester as to the condition of ice on the canals and we were told they were clear now! A special rather hurried permission had been received from British Waterways to use the canals and tunnels.

We arrived at Leicester at 6 p.m. and as it was already dark we did not bother to inspect the canal.

Wednesday morning was a clear sharp day and when we arrived at Aylestone on the outskirts of Leicester we were surprised to see so much flooding. The water was moving fast and showed all the signs of being clear of ice. After bidding farewell, we left Aylestone at 9 a.m. and started our paddle to London. The first few hundred yards were ideal then we turned the second bend and ran straight into a sheet of ice that stretched from bank to bank. We took the canoes out of the water, consulted maps and saw a stream to the south. This was flowing the wrong way and had far too much water to paddle against it.

We therefore decided to continue along the bank of the canal but on talking to lock keepers found the canal was impassable, until it joined the main Grand Union at Norton Junction.

It was now a matter of whether to abandon the trip or to continue by road up to the main canal. We decided to continue. We arrived at Norton just after lunch and paddled on to Cosgrove. Due to the conditions, progress was slow. We had to portage all the tunnels as well as the locks. There was a lot of loose ice on the canal and although it could be avoided in daylight, it was too dangerous in the dark tunnels, and in consequence, we were portaging them. As we progressed the wind heightened and collected all the ice into packs, and once it got dark these also had to be portaged.

By the time we reached Cosgrove we had completed over 80 portages and the upper lock at Cosgrove showed a stretch of ice as far as the eye could see. We, therefore, decided to stop here for the night. A local farmer kindly lent us his barn and the local publican allowed us to dry our now saturated clothes. Besides the spray that had been blown up against us we also suffered from an hour of torrential rain towards the end of the day. When we retired at 10 p.m. we had no difficulty in falling asleep.

We woke on Thursday to the sound of a gale blowing. It was later discovered that there were gusts of up to 80 m.p.h. and of course it was accompanied by heavy rain. The party left soon after dawn broke; that sounds early, but was in actual fact 9 a.m. We paddled to the Black Horse Café, where we had a good breakfast. We paddled on now through open country, ice flows and a gale until we reached Bletchley

just after mid-day. Unfortunately one of the boats, a Wessex Mk.II, which had previously been repaired, sprang a leak and had to be left behind with its crew. It was letting water in at the rate of about two gallons every five minutes. The remaining three boats pressed on without delay to Leighton Buzzard where we had another good meal provided by a café proprietor, who was also a keen canoeist. As our map was now saturated, he lent us his to study while we ate our meal. We left Leighton at about 7 p.m. and continued our paddle up to Tring. Tring Heights were found to be a bit of a strain at 1.30 a.m. but none the less we conquered them and at the top celebrated with hot coffee laced well with rum and glucose. We continued paddling for another hour but found our strength somewhat sapped and eventually rather irritably took shelter in a Dutch barn.

It was just nine o'clock when we once again put our paddles in the water. At the next lock we were welcomed by the sign of a nearby café. Here we had an excellent breakfast and were soon in high spirits. Our morale was heightened also by the lack of rain but the wind was still fresh. However, we paddled through lovely country right through to Rickmansworth where we stopped for our evening meal. It was only 6.30. Over the meal we discussed the remainder of the trip and it was decided that we would go to bed now, get up at midnight and paddle right through the next eleven hours to arrive at Putney at eleven thirty.

We had some difficulty in finding accommodation but eventually found someone who was willing to let us use his house boat. It was very small and I am sure he thought we were mad when we told him we would be leaving at midnight. However, six of us crowded into a two berth boat and apart from an Irishman falling out of his bed on top of me, we had a quiet four hours sleep.

We left Rickmansworth at 12.15 a.m. on Saturday morning and arrived at Watford at 4.30 a.m. starving hungry having only had coffee before we set out. A very healthy breakfast was enjoyed by us all but spirits were somewhat daunted when we realised how cold it was outside. The decks of all the boats were covered in ice. The remainder of the journey was uneventful. We passed through north east London too early in the morning to see anything of interest. The last flight of locks made heavy portaging as there were seven sets of locks all in a row and then the final straight to Brentford lock - what a pleasant sight. Only one more lock to go. Thames lock was under repair and in consequences caused us some 15 minutes delay. It is impossible to portage either Brentford or Thames lock owing to the very tall steep sides below the locks. The most welcome sign I have yet experienced was the sight of the Thames at low tide slowly running out to sea. How pleasant it was just to catch the end of the tide and to almost float freely down the river between the eights, the diamond sculls, and the Port of London Authority launches. The occasional friendly wave of welcome from the bank, heightened our spirits. Best of all the sight of Putney Bridge and the party welcoming us in to the shore. We were exhausted, but happy.

For anyone who is interested, of the 137 miles of waterway we were only able to paddle 98 miles and in this we had 129 locks, 83 ice flows, and three tunnels, a total of 213 portages. (We used two locks). It took  $74\frac{1}{2}$  hours from start to finish an average of 1.8 miles per hour overall although we actually paddled at an average



speed of 2.6 miles per hour. By normal standard not very good but considering four of the original eight had paddled less than ten times previously, not a bad average. We also contended with a force 7 gale.

During the trip apart from the two meals a day the only other foods eaten were glucose and chocolate and the drinks were coffee and rum. Average consumption per head was 1 oz. of instant coffee, 2 packets of glucose tablets, 6 bars of plain chocolate, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  bottle of rum.

We are now contemplating an April trip of 430 miles by canoe from Richmond, Yorkshire to Christchurch in Hampshire, which will be completed in 14 days at an average speed of 4 m.p.h.

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## B.C.U. MEMBERSHIP AND CAPITATION FEES

Dear Sir,

With reference to your Editorial in the last issue of 'Canoeing', your readers may be interested in the following extract from a letter sent to the secretaries of all affiliated clubs at the beginning of November.

Yours faithfully,  
Rodney Baker,  
Hon. Secretary. British Canoe Union.

As you are aware, since the last A.G.M. when the membership agreed to an increase of the Capitation Fees there have been signs of growing dissatisfaction.

Proof has been put to the Council that many canoe clubs up and down the country do not affiliate because they consider the subscription structure too complicated and the subscription itself too high.

The recruiting officers of the Union have been put under considerable pressure of late by not a few organisations who feel that our present forms of membership do not meet their own particular need, and have requested still more types of affiliation to be invented.

The Council feels that the time has come to simplify our membership structure and the basis for calculating subscriptions.

The Council has considered a proposal that briefly would leave the Union with two forms of membership.

- (1) Affiliated Club or other Organisations.
- (2) Members.

(This is to be divided into: a. Adult, b. Family, and c. Youth)

Suggested annual subscriptions are (1) 2 gns. (2)a. 7s. 6d., b. 2s. 6d c. 4s. 6d. Entrance Fees. To be abolished. The Council is prepared to back this proposal and is at present working on the necessary amendments to rules. Under this scheme, the affiliated Clubs as corporate bodies would receive certain rights, e.g. a voice at the A.G.M. and voices on committees and the right to seek Union recognition for their canoeing events. The members of the clubs would derive no personal privileges from the B.C.U. but must to obtain them join the B.C.U. as a Member. As members they would then enjoy all the rights and privileges they do not at the present time, and receive their copy of Canoeing in Britain direct from the Union.

# CANOES IN FLOOD EXERCISE

As seen by Mike Clark

An exercise designed to ascertain the value of canoes for reconnaissance work in time of flood was held Sunday, 28th October on the flooded gravel pits at Wraysbury near Staines. Organised by the Berkshire Police Constabulary, with Chief Superintendent L. Harman in charge, some 40 canoeists from as far afield as Bristol, London, South Wales, Twickenham and the Isle of Wight, took part. Observers came from Durham, Worcester, Hampshire and London.

At a short briefing the police explained the kind of information the canoeist would be expected to report. Depth of water at certain places, direction of flow if any, number of persons stranded and any requirements.

The 'flooded area' covered a number of imaginary roads running across the gravel pits, with an island in the centre, representing an hotel. Canoeists, in teams of four, plus one B.C.U. 'Ligeguard', set off at intervals under the watchful eye of Oliver Cock, to explore eight different situations.

Although the exercise showed great potential value of canoeists in flood, I feel that further exercises should have more realistic water conditions. The tranquil water in the pits looked a far cry from newsreel films of floods along the East coast. Let us test the canoeist's skill in handling his craft, not just his ability to ask questions.

As seen by 15 years old Richard Fernandes

On 28th October some of Twickenham Canoe Club were invited to join in a canoe flood exercise at Wraysbury.

We had not the faintest idea of what it was about, so after pitching our tents we went along to the briefing. The other clubs present and ourselves were split up into teams of five which included one national lifeguard who was not allowed to help us.

Mr. Oliver Cock then showed us a large map of the reservoir which represented the flooded area. On the map were marked a number of roads which had been flooded. The roads were aptly named after fishes. He told us that last night a flood had occurred and the reservoir was the area underwater which was at a temperature of 0° Centigrade. As I was dressed only in my swim suit, I believed him. What we were going to do was to find out what was wrong at the map references to which we would be sent. We were told to follow the roads as much as possible, for they would be clear of such things as hedges, television aerials, and other things that would be likely to damage the bottoms of our canoes. At the map references were police cadets who knew exactly what their imaginary situation was. They had been told to give us no information for which we did not ask. We were given a map of the area, a sheet of paper which told us what the imaginary situation at the map reference was, and a rough idea of the information wanted by the police.

So we elected a leader, donned our lifejackets, had one last cup of hot soup from a flask and set off in single file for our first map reference.

A typical incident would proceed as follows. Approaching our map reference, we would be unable to find any sign of a police cadet, only perhaps a lonely fisherman a short way off. We would make a short unavailing search for the cadet, not without amusement on the part of the fisherman. Unable to find him we would approach the fisherman and ask if he had seen a police cadet in the neighbourhood. Bursting out laughing, he would admit that he was the "caravan site". On which statement we would turn very red and start the interrogation.

"Would you like any soup?" we would start, believing in winning them over, but every time we had a negative reply. I suppose they are not allowed to drink on duty. Then we would ask such questions as ... How many people are there here? Does anyone need medical attention? What is wrong with them? Can you treat them? Do you need any medical supplies for them? A prescription, from what doctor? How long will your food, lighting and heating last? Do you want to be evacuated? Is the water rising? Have you anything that you can supply to other stranded people? When did you last see your father? And on, and on, until you cannot think of anything else. Then we looked around to see if the place could be approached by land, or if there was anywhere for easy landing and any other useful information.

Returning to base, we would hand our report over to a police inspector who would cross-examine us on the incident and explained anything we had missed or did not understand. Then we would be handed another map reference.



Briefing the canoeists

cont'd on page 12...

# POSTSCRIPT ON THE 1962 BRITISH OPEN YOUTH CHAMPIONSHIPS

By Arthur L. Todd  
National Organiser,  
B.C.U. Youth Championships

1. Introduction - This was the first year in which the full scheme has been operated. The results of the Area Youth Championships introduced as an experiment in 1961 had proved sufficient to encourage the launching of a full scale competition in 1962 with separate Championships in each of the areas chosen and with the winners from each area competing in the National Youth Championships held in August at the Serpentine Regatta.

2. At the Serpentine - One of the most heartening features of this year's competition was that so many of the Area Champions took part in the National event despite the fact that we were unable to contribute in any way to their fares and other expenses. The standard of racing and discipline among these youngsters was agreeably surprising. We were very fortunate in being provided free of charge by the manufacturers with enough kayaks for all those competitors who could not bring their own. These were "Sport-Gannets" and "Moonrakers", both of which were specifically designed for racing, and "Kayels". Some very good times were recorded and I feel that there is obviously a need for organisers of sprint regattas to include in their programmes races for this type of craft.

3. What of the scheme as a whole - To judge the measure of success achieved we must look back to the object of the scheme which was first and foremost to encourage more youngsters to take up competitive canoeing and in particular to specialise in sprint racing. If this object is achieved then a secondary result must follow, i.e. an improvement in canoeing ability generally since it is not possible to become a racing expert without first mastering the various aspects of canoe handling, watermanship, etc.

The degree of success in achieving the primary object is difficult to measure as this is most likely to come from the snowball effect of the whole scheme. For example, the simple fact that eight sprint regattas were staged in various areas of England and in Scotland and Northern Ireland means that sprint racing has been seen and tried in four more areas than last year and in eight more than the year before that.

Among the competitors were boys from canoe clubs where this sort of racing has not previously been practised. The chances are that many of these clubs will now decide to stage sprint regattas themselves.

There were boys from Army Apprentice Schools and Junior Leaders Regiments and what better boost for racing could there be than to get it taken up by the services with their considerable organisational resources. Conversely what a lot of canoeing, especially competitive canoeing, has to offer these junior sections of the army.

There were also teams from various schools and here again there is a tremendous future for canoeing if education authorities will realise how easily this sport can be introduced into their physical education programmes without the terrific cost that would be involved for example in introducing rowing. The introduction of the virtually indestructible fibre glass racing kayaks makes it possible for schools to take up canoeing cheaply and without any great storage problems.

In the first year of the competition the youngsters raced only in the area events and were then left in a vacuum. This year however the area winners were given a further goal to aim at. They trained hard for the national event and some, who had had an easy win in their area, were astounded at the competition they met at the Serpentine. Somewhat surprisingly the winners of the boys' national titles did not come from areas where sprint racing has flourished in the past. This surely is an encouragement to all those who intend to compete next year. Any boy with the keenness to train hard, from anywhere in the country, now knows that he has a chance of coming to the Serpentine to race in front of a crowd of some 6,000 people and be watched on television, and to carry off the title of "Youth Champion of Great Britain". Equally important was the fact that many of them were introduced to faster racing kayaks and all were able to watch real sprint racing in international class kayaks by many of the best canoeists in Europe. They were made to feel that they were part of the kayak racing fraternity. I feel sure that many of them must have gone home with a vastly different picture of kayak racing and a determination to take it up seriously. After all they had already been keen enough to travel at their own expense from Northern Ireland, Scotland and places in England as far apart as Somerset and West Hartlepool.

4. The future - Assuming that the scheme will continue to grow under its own momentum, what about the present area set up? One of our main difficulties has been in deciding the size of each area. If these are too large it means an expensive journey for many of the youngsters taking part. If they are too small the result may be either to split the available youngsters between two adjoining areas with neither getting enough entries to stage a regatta, or it may mean that a regatta is staged in an area which although geographically convenient, does not in fact contain enough districts where canoeing is practised to any great extent. So far we have been guided by the Regional Officers of the C.C.P.R. In some Regions, e.g., the Eastern Region, we combined the Central and Eastern Areas as the man on the spot advised that this was the best course. In other regions, e.g., Wales and the South West of England, the Regional Officer advises that the Area is too large and he suggests separate Area Championships for (i) Wales; (ii) South-West covering Cornwall and Devon; and (iii) West - covering Somerset, Dorset, Wilts & Glos. The regatta bases for these could be Llandaff, Plymouth and Bradford-on-Avon.

This sort of advice is invaluable and will be acted upon. Our main aim is that there should be an Area Championship within easy reach of every boy or girl in the Area. An increase in the number of Areas presents no problems at all. The Area winners would still take part in the National event but there would then have to be heats instead of straight finals as this year. This year our original

selection of 13 areas was whittled down to 10 of which 8 actually took place, the other two being cancelled owing to lack of entries. This was still twice as many regattas as in 1961.

5. Publicity - Another major obstacle to be overcome is that of making the competition known to those likely to take part. The C.C.P.R. Regional Officers have done an enormous amount of ground-work in this respect and I am sure that this will bear fruit as each year passes. People who either see the regattas or read about them for the first time may often think to themselves "I wish I'd known about this beforehand then my lads could have taken part."

I have done my best to publicise the scheme on a national scale. Details have appeared in various publications which circulate among the Youth Service Officers. It is an established fact that youngsters need someone to push them into competitions of this sort and I am hopeful that leaders of the various Youth Services will do this once they get to know of the existence of the scheme. Articles have appeared in the various canoeing magazines - "Canoeing in Britain", "Canoeing" and "Light Craft" - and in a number of national newspapers including "The Times" and "The News of the World". This sort of publicity is difficult to arrange however until the dates and venues have been arranged in every area. By that time it is impossible to get it into periodicals which youngsters buy. This difficulty could be overcome by agreeing in advance that all the Area events should be held on the same date if possible. 22nd June, 1963, would be ideal for the next competition.

6. Conclusion - We in the British Canoe Union feel that in view of the difficulty of getting a scheme of this nature going throughout the British Isles the success so far achieved is sufficiently encouraging to justify its continuation and we hope that all those people who have helped so far will continue in the future. Canoeing is a healthy and exciting sport and one that is well worth encouraging.

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...cont'd from page 9

I was thoroughly converted to the idea of using canoes as flood reconnaissance units. They can reach the stranded people long before the water is deep enough to take police rescue boats. They can be lifted easily over obstacles and can save a tremendous amount of time by telling the police just what the stranded people need and which people need help most urgently. They can find out which places have surplus food stocks, which need medical attention and might perhaps administer first aid themselves. It would be impossible for a rescue boat to carry enough medicine to deal with every urgent prescription so to cover them they would have to make two journeys. Trained canoeists can halve the time needed to evacuate a flooded area and by their help the police can save many lives.

It seemed to me that to help in such an emergency as a flood, one only needs the experience like we had at Wraysbury and of that we cannot have enough. We all enjoyed the exercise very much as it ran so smoothly, which I think is a great tribute to its organisers, especially to Mr. Oliver Cock who seemed to be the commanding figure.

# LETTERS

Dear Sir,

B.C.U. Membership

I seem to remember that I rose to the bait of an editorial concerning individual B.C.U. membership about the same time last year. You printed that letter and I have often meant to write to let you know that for the past three years I have been organising what we call "Medway Challenge Rallies". I particularly wanted to reply because I felt that I was told by a counter-correspondent that I might be able to do something in the cause of canoeing if I took more interest in the B.C.U.

Anyway here I am rising to that bait again. When the B.C.U. actively supports the development of skill in double canoes and when it thumps the tub of safety equipment, then it might discover that there is some very serious canoeing done in doubles and that there are people who believe that a reasonable life-jacket is more important than any other piece of canoeing equipment. I will not support any organisation concerned with small craft which does not actively insist that the use of a life-jacket is an absolute must. Like Sgt. Bostock, I and my associates teach many raw canoeists. Like him, we are constantly having to explain why we insist on life-jackets and a rigorous safety drill while there seems to be so little importance attached to such matters in canoeing literature. I am enclosing the copies of the Rules for the various events that we hold in the Medway Challenge Rallies ... you can read for yourself how we view the subject. Our most recent results sheet is also enclosed to give some idea that we perform at a reasonable standard. Our next Rally is on December 9th. You will see that our type of canoeing may be derided as ditch crawling in passion wagons, but I invite anyone who feels too cocky to notice that the word Challenge appears in the title of every event. Also you can see that our type of canoeing naturally associates us with other activities which entail patient preparation, regular training and occasional outbursts of violent energy. We have never cancelled a Rally because of bad weather and, up till now, we have never really worried whether our results go into print. In the recent meet we trained the crews belonging to our rival club to the point where they took first places from our junior crews.

Do not get the feeling that anything will happen if the B.C.U. lowers the cost of individual membership. Let it think how much of an insult it is to a crew that has trained to paddle and think as a unit to know that they would have to take the B.C.U. Proficiency Tests individually.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Antwis, M.A.  
Four Admirals Canoe Club,  
Rochester.

(The 1962 Medway Challenge Race (30 miles, 9 portages) was won in 4 hours 19 $\frac{3}{4}$  minutes by L.B. Smith and G. Loxton paddling a Sharkie)

Dear Sir,

### Crossing the Channel

I was interested to read the letter written by Mr. Jack Travers concerning an incident in the Press about the National Association of Boys' Clubs' Cross Channel Venture.

I am afraid that Mr. Travers did not allow sufficiently for exaggeration, in-accuracy or sensationalism, because the particular statement he quoted was quite ridiculous. I took part in the crossing myself and whilst I admit that the Canoeing standard was not as high as it might have been, the Group, which amounted to eight pairs had a full day's training in Dover Harbour which included capsizing drill and very rigid formation work. The Expedition was arranged in great detail by the N.A.B.C. and had two vessels in support. The pilot vessel was skippered by a very well known Channel pilot and the main support vessel was large enough to take the whole group on board, with their canoes.

What actually happened was this - the Group left St. Margaret's Bay in reasonable conditions, in two sections of four, each section led by an adult pair and very close formation was maintained from then on (the decision to leave was that of our pilot). We had intended to cross to Sangatte in between 7 and 8 hours but the sea became so rough that after  $6\frac{1}{2}$  hours only two Canoes were still in the water. Each canoe, as the pair retired, was hoisted aboard the main support vessel most efficiently, and in spite of the big sea running, there was not a single capsizing.

Whilst I appreciate the concern by many Canoeists over adventurous enterprises in terms of safety precautions, I do feel that each expert is inclined to consider himself as "the last word" in Canoeing (this incidentally could be applied to me). I join Mr. Travers in his concern for proper preparation and full safety precautions but let us never suggest that a control be applied to anything which demands skill, endurance and sheer 'guts' of our young men.

Yours faithfully,

E.W. Tait  
Youth Organiser  
Borough of Guildford.

Dear Sir,

### Rolling Classes

I would like to invite on behalf of our canoeing club, anyone who can make it, to our session in our large heated indoor swimming bath on Wednesday evenings from 7.45 p.m. - 9.00 p.m.

We have a slalom pole rigged up for the wiggle test (unofficial) and rolling competitions and tuition. Learners are most welcome and experts.

Yours faithfully,

PO/A C. Hammock,  
Benbow Div.,  
H.M.S. Caledonia,  
ROSYTH,  
Scotland.



Dear Sir,

Dexter Watts letter and your comment, P.185 Oct. issue. About 'folbot'. The pre-war firm of 'Folbot' was at Hatfield St., E.C.1. if I remember rightly and I often wondered if there was any connection between them and 'Granta' that opened up during the war? Certainly there was a 'Folbot' boat after the war - quite a few years after the war in fact - which was manufactured by the Walter Kidde Co. Ltd. Northolt in association with the R.F.D. Co. Ltd., of Godalming, Surrey. Production of the boat seems to have moved from Northolt to Slough if the information on the catalogues that I have is anything to go by. I only remember seeing a couple of their boats and, from what I remember, was not very impressed.

Just had second thoughts and wondered whether the original Folbot man (J.Kissner by name?) moved off to America during the war for is there not or was there not an American 'Folbot' boat about that time?

All best wishes,

GEOFF. SANDERS

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cont'd from page 4

The course is liable to vary from day to day depending upon water levels so it is advisable, if possible, to practise over the course two or three times. In some cases the channel is hard to find and a careful reconnoitre is essential. In the race expect no quarter and give none, one must go all out to win, some punishment to the boat must be expected.

There are a number of different classes both senior and junior, in the main these are K1, K2, C1, C2, F1 and F2, all to international specifications. Only the "K" classes do the complete course of 19 kms., C1, C2, F1 and F2 15 kms. and Juniors 7 kms.

This was the first time that we had competed in this event and we hope that it will not be the last and we also hope that you will be tempted to enter a race, that is unique by our standards. The winners names are engraved in a tablet of stone at the Eastern end of the bridge at Ribadesella and as yet there are none in English. This year thirteen Nations competed, Germany, Belgium, Denmark, France, Luxembourg, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, Finland, America, Spain and England. There were 195 paddlers and 116 canoes. The record for the course is 1hr. 24 mins. 44 secs and was established in 1960. The winners this year were G.Blanco and G.C.Covadonga of Spain in 1hr. 27 mins. 51 secs. with H.Meen and O.Meen from Norway a very close second. The first K.1 completed the course in 1hr. 31 mins. 39 secs., which was a new record and was paddled by R.Grunberg from Germany. Altogether 36 crews (5 K.1's and 31 K.2's) qualified as finishers.

We completed the course but hope to go faster next time.

# IRISH CANOE UNION AGM

Reported by Derek Martin (Hon.Sec. I.C.U.)

At 7 p.m. on Saturday, 27th October, the A.G.M. commenced. The business agenda was neatly handled by the Chairman of the I.C.U., Arthur Keenan of the Belfast C.C. Following the President's speech of welcome, the Hon. Secretary's report was adopted as a correct record of the circumstances leading to this first annual general meeting.

The Hon. Treasurer's report (given by the Hon. Secretary) showed that the establishment up to date had cost £61 and this was not a final figure. No income, of course, had been received. Mr.M.Fleming (President, Espoir C.C.) proposed that the E.C.C. donate £10 over and above its affiliation fees to assist the finances. Belfast and Dun Laoghaire C.C.'s offered to do likewise.

The elections: the acting officers were unanimously elected to the positions:-

President	-	A.P.Meldon (D.L.C.C.)
Chairman	-	A.S.Keenan (Belfast C.C.)
Hon. Secretary	-	D.R.Martin (D.L.C.C.)

and in addition:

Hon. Treasurer	-	P.Richardson (Espoir C.C.)
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Affiliation fees were set on a per capita basis of 5s. per full member, and 2s.6d. per Junior/Family/Associate member. Individual subscription was set at £1. All applications to the Hon. Secretary, I.C.U., 33 Barnhill Road, Dalkey, Co. Dublin.

Affiliation to the I.C.F.: The I.C.F. Council is negotiating with the Irish Olympic Council, and will be applying for affiliation immediately.

Fifty-five delegates attended the meeting, representing five fully established clubs (we had expected more) and interested sailing clubs who had approached the Union with a view to establishing canoe sections. Apart from the main centres at Dublin and Belfast, other centres are to be established at Kilbarrack (Co.Dublin), Rathangan (Co.Kildare), Arklow (Co.Wicklow), Athlone in the Midlands on the Shannon, Killaloe near Limerick on the Shannon. Another centre will be Cork.

Many other items were discussed including: Irish classification of canoeists, events for 1963 in touring and competition, and an exhibition. Another historic event which coincided with this meeting was the launching of "The Irish Canoeist", edited by Neil Bracken (D.L.C.C.). This typeset 16 page magazine will be the official bi-monthly of the I.C.U., price 1s.6d. (10s. annual subscription, including postage). Address: 42 Marian Road, Rathfarnham, Co.Dublin. Proceeds of this magazine will go to a fund to assist potential canoeists visiting Britain and abroad in competition.

Austin Meldon, President, announced the offer of a silver cup plus £20 first prize, and other prizes, for a 12 mile, Lough Corrib race from Galway City (W.Ireland) to Greenfield Hotel, Headforth. This will take place early in 1963, and will be the first canoeing

event in the West; there being no activity as yet in this province.

The meeting concluded with a film show.

Tribute must be paid to Hein Thelen of the I.C.F. who spent the weekend with us, and who was able to offer much valuable guidance from his long experience of canoeing organisation in many countries. As a token of their appreciation, the I.C.U. are proposing to elect Hein Thelen a life honorary member of the Union.

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## NEWS FLASHES

### B.C.U. A.G.M. PROPOSALS

Readers are reminded that motions and nominations for the B.C.U. A.G.M. must be in the hands of the Secretary of the Union by 30th November. As announced in 'Canoeing in Britain' the A.G.M. will be held on 26th January, at Star Cross School, Sidmouth Street, London W.C.1.

### NEW KLEPPER WHITE WATER KAYAKS

George Reardon of the Canoe Centre has just returned from a visit to the Klepper factory in Germany. He brought back with him two new glass fibre boats; the SLALOM 63 and the QUIRL. The first of these is a pure slalom boat and is of 'Cigar shape' design, the second whilst incorporating the rounded gunwale is intended for the white water racing enthusiast. Both boats are expected to retail at £38 to £40.

### NO NEW STRUER DESIGNS

Struer have announced that they will be introducing no new designs in 1963. The only new model will be a POINTER 75 which is intended for the heavier paddler; the existing model will remain unchanged except that it will be designated the POINTER 65. Less welcome news, however, is notice of a 5% to 6% increase in all Struer prices from the 1st January, 1963. We understand that orders placed before Christmas will be supplied at current prices.

### GRASS SKIRTS AND ANARAKS

The central feature of the forthcoming Boat Show will be "a replica of a South Pacific Island native village set as a colourful island between twin pools." At the Camping & Outdoor Life Exhibition the star attraction will be a canoe rolling demonstration given by the Royal Marines. Now, if we could only have the dancing girls in the Kayaks...

### INDEX TO 'CANOEING'

An index to Vols. 1 and 2 of 'Canoeing' has been prepared by Mrs. Nora Sanders. If you have not received yours please apply to the Circulation Manager.

# RESULTS

## THE ROYAL LEAMINGTON SPA AND WORCESTER CANOE CLUBS

1st and 2nd Division Slalom		Llandysul, 7th October 1962.	
Club	Time	Penalty	Total
David Mitchell	226	60	286
Paul Mervin	229	40	269
Frank Everleigh	252	40	292
Ian Carmichael	268	80	348
John Crickshay	231	80	311
Ken Miles, leader	265	70	335
Nigel Nosley	265	70	335
Terry Woodcock	268	70	338
Golf Diddale	248	90	338

## LONDON RIVER RACE RESULTS 1962

Place	Junior Race September 29th - Kewlake to Richmond	TIME TAKEN
1	M.Mear, Hatfield Youth Club	34m. --8.
2	R.Watson, Canoe Touring Club	34m. 25s.
3	N.White, Royal Canoe Club	35m. 15s.
4	C.Black, Richmond Canoe Club	35m. 20s.
5	J.Bloxham, Hatfield Youth Club	36m. 50s.
6	C.Springham, Royal Canoe Club	37m. 37s.
7	M.Peters, Hatfield Youth Club	39m. --
8	J.Sims, Junior Tradesman's Regt. C.C.	40m. 10s.
9	F.Dunry " " "	not recorded
10.	Journing Canadian Patre, Ken. Hortlake to Richmond	not recorded

Paddle over by R.Fish & B.Birk, Canoe Touring Club

## ALL THE FOLLOWING CLASSES FROM ORESWORTH NAVAL COLLEGE

Place	Boat	Time
1	Folding Single, Men	2hrs. 59m
2	R.Pish, Canoe Touring Club	3
	B.Pascock, Met. Police	12
1	Field Single, under 16ft.	2
2	F.O'Keefe, Richmond Canoe Club	52
3	D.Wade, Junior Tradesman's Regt. C.C.	9
	C.Brown " " "	14
1	Field Double, 17ft. and under	2
2	J.Cole & D.Wood, Mercis Hospital	36
3	J.Campbell & P.Pye, North Sea Camp C.C.	38
4	L.Jackson & J.Barry, Braxley Boys Club & R.L.S.C.C.	41
5	V.Vealouke & P.Harry, North Sea Camp C.C.	42
6	R.Ellis & D.Shield, M.C. A.C.	45
7	R.Kynon & C.Richardson, Junior Tradesman's Regt. C.C.	50
8	L.Morris & B.Suggett, North Sea Camp C.C.	52

## Second Division

Name	Club	Time	Penalty	Total	Pos.
George Bolt	Chalfont	274	50	284	1
Derek Baker	Windser	227	60	287	2
Malcolm Thompson	Worcester	231	40	291	3
David Green	Llandarf	206	100	306	4
Bob Baldwin	Reading	203	118	321	5
Geoff Blackford	Worcester	223	100	323	6
Robin Powell	Worcester	220	110	330	7
Stewart Baker	Forth	211	119	330	8
Ken Pennington	Nanchoester	216	140	356	10

## Ladies Division

Name	Club	Time	Penalty	Total	Pos.
Heather Goodman	Lakeland	264	90	354	1
Margaret Bellford	Chalfont	346	90	436	2
Mary Pinder	Lenington	350	320	670	3
Jean Battersby	Nanchoester	331	350	681	4

Place	Boat	Time
1	Field Single, Min. Length 16ft.	34m. --8.
2	D.Sherriland, Llandarf Canoe Club	35m. 15s.
3	P.Hastings, Exeter Canoe Club	35m. 20s.
4	D.Salter, " " "	36m. 50s.
5	Folding Double, Men	37m. 37s.
6	M.Pasport & M.Harding, R.E.M.E.	39m. --
7	D.Jitchell & R.Saeger, Royal Marines C.C.	40m. 10s.
8	O.Reynolds & F.Com, 2nd Bn. Parachute Regt.	not recorded
9	D.McAlvey & K.Miles, R.N.F.V. R. City of London (Service Canoe)	not recorded
10	C.Campion & H.Giles " " "	not recorded
11	A.Chisholm & P.Board " " "	not recorded
12	O.Anger & T.Strom " " "	not recorded
13	Folding Double, over 17ft.	not recorded
14	J.Dalton & B.Smith, Canoe Touring Club	2
15	R.Lowery & J.Bosche, Royal Canoe Club	2
16	D.Green & D.Heycock, Viking Kayak Club	2
17	B.Fratt & A.Tong, Royal Canoe Club	2
18	R.Hartley, Royal Canoe Club	2
19	K.Hosner & P.Scott, Royal Canoe Club	2
20	J.Milgate & P.Scott, Met. Police	2
21	P.Jas & H.Pear, Exeter Canoe Club	2
22	A.Kirkby & A.Nallet, Royal Canoe Club	2
23	J.Cole & J.O'Connell, 57 Trg. Sqdn. C.C.	2
24	J.Ingram & J.Perr " " "	2
25	6 crews did not race as entered.	not recorded

Presentations were made by His Worship the Mayor of Lambeth at the Castle Hotel, Richmond by courtesy of R.V. Hatcher, Esq.

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