

Canoeing

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VOL 7 NUMBER 3 FEBRUARY 1967



SPECIAL FEATURES

"... OF CANOES AND
SHIPS AND MINI-BOATS"

CANOEING IN WEYMOUTH

DIVERS - A CASE FOR
ACTION

A MAN AND HIS MINI-HULL

Photo: D. Courtman

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Test Reports on Canoes

On our letter pages this month we print a letter from a reader asking for test reports on canoes. In theory this is a sound idea, and in the early years of 'Canoeing' we published several, but of late we have discontinued the practice.

There are several reasons for this; first, the problems of uniting a boat and a suitably qualified person with the ability to write a good descriptive technical report, and, second, the problem of the contents of such a report. It is the latter which causes us most concern.

A canoe is a very individual thing whose performance under any given set of circumstances will depend upon the abilities of the paddler. But paddlers, fortunately, are human beings complete with irrational prejudices and pre-conceived ideas, and a limited amount of time. Under these circumstances we feel it would be very difficult to produce a test report which is completely objective. If you doubt this, just try suggesting at your next club meeting that Brand X is the only make of canoe worth considering!

Ideally, a good test report would be produced by a club who had two or three samples of the canoe in question for a period of three months and who then gathered the comments of several members who had tried the canoes in question and matched them against existing craft. We would like to see such a scheme in operation, but regret that it is rather too ambitious for our present Editorial set-up.

".... of Canoes and Ships and Mini-boats"

BY DUDLEY COURTMAN

We are living in an era of the swimming baths canoeist. Under the guidance of an instructor you can learn all you need by paddling up and down your local swimming pool.

Beginners can be "baths hatched" away from the cruel sea and murky canals, in artificial light and heat. The sun, wind and waves can be left in the corner until they are required. The gleaming new canoeist emerges after his course of instruction shimmering in his artificial cloak of competency. Straight away he can tilt his paddle at haystack, stopper and backlash and expect some success. We all know that it works. Upside down, up the creek without a paddle, the new canoeist no-paddle rolls to the top and paddles home with his hands.

In our schools and youth clubs it is impossible to dash off to the local river for 40 minutes and be back in time for modern mathematics. Nor can you practice your Duffek in the dark of a winter's evening after a day at work. Chipping a "canoe hole" in January's ice is another deterrent.

The swimming bath is the answer. Is it a simple solution? We can't have a 15ft monster charging up and down during the school swimming lesson, running down the bath tiles and leaving a trail of mud and last year's leaves in its wake.

We can fiddle a mini-canoe into a swimming group and ask the local baths for canoeing time for special baths boats. What is needed to keep bath authorities happy is something small, soft and clean. It hardly sounds like a canoe! This small soft thing must be capable of responding to all the basic strokes in a challenging way so that the paddler has to concentrate. Mistakes must be rewarded with the ultimate in canoeing - a capsized and a tight spray cover.

For these reasons, after seeing Tom Hall's glass-fibre prototype at Woolwich, Bert Keeble of the National Sailing Centre and myself set to work. Bert produced our first nine-footer, with a 22" beam and an eskimo cockpit, built on the Vardy principle of $1\frac{1}{2}$ mm ply and glass sheathing construction. The forward deck was rounded and the after deck flattened to facilitate rolling. The boat has built in buoyancy fore and aft.

Oliver Cock tried it at Crystal Palace and was impressed, particularly at its looping qualities when paddled forward fast. This was partly due to a leaky forward buoyancy compartment.

I wasn't keen on beginners submarining on me when they paddled forward. We moved the seat back a little, narrowed the beam to 21" and made the cockpit slightly smaller. The result: a very nice little baths boat which is a joy to paddle, performing well on all strokes, basic and advanced. The flattened ends enable rubber fenders to be fitted, fulfilling the essential soft quality. The gunwales need to have 'D' rubber fitted on them.

Another factor favouring mini-canoes - the small paddler - came out in conversation with Bob Vardy of Avoncraft. Picture a ten year old waving a telegraph pole in a Thames barge. Enough to put him off canoeing for ever. Therefore a boat scaled down to suit

the under-twelves would meet a great need. Vardy was interested also in the simplicity of building and has produced a baths-cruising boat combined.

AVONCRAFT "Mini" baths canoe

Length 8ft 10ins.
Beam 21ins.
Weight 16th.



Stages in development

The result is a canoe shrunk proportionately: length 8ft 10in, beam 21in, weighing 16lbs. It is fitted with roll bars and a slalom type cockpit (features which could be amended to suit individual requirements). It can be built on a simple jig consisting of three frames, from a kit of $1\frac{1}{2}$ mm. birch ply using Vardy's method of stapling, glueing and fibreglass sheathing. Details can be obtained from him (Avoncraft Ltd., 30 Cavan Road, Redbourn, Herts.)

A group of six boys virtually built four of these boats, in a little over a week. Although they needed help and supervision at first, I felt that confronted with the kit now they could produce a boat in next to no time.

Getting in the Vardy boat is the same as for any slalom. Beginners need help and must be taught to sit on the rear of the cockpit first. I paddled the boat and found it wobbly - an essential quality for baths beginners, or any for that matter. They have got to get the "whew-hoo" feeling when they let go of the bank for the first time. It must be capsized correctly, or you stick, another valuable training point. Lean forward, straight legs and a push at hip level is the first lesson in canoeing. Incorrect technique and you are in trouble, so supervision is vital.

Left
Bert Keeble's
second baths canoe

Right
Vardy Baths Boat



Vardy boat trials

Training boats are dangerous to the inexperienced who tries to start himself. I think it is a good idea if these boats are left in the baths that words should be written on them forbidding unsupervised use. The chances of children sticking in them are far less than with an adult but we can't afford to take a chance.

I paddled the boat forward and back, round and round. It has a small turning circle and an unbelievable 'parking' capacity. I can get two of them inside my car!

Slight overconfidence costs you a wetting. It pawlattas, screws, loops if you like, and will, if pressed, do a no-paddle roll.

Its two-fold purpose gives it a canoe-like shape which is a disadvantage in the pool as its sharp bow and stern are potential hazards: this could be overcome with padding of some description.

The exclusive mini-baths boat has these points in its favour. It economizes on pool space - you can keep more canoeists on the go. It demands a high degree of canoe competence. It is clean and 'baths-proofed.' It is cheap and can be built simply.

Have we found the ideal baths boat yet? I think yes and no. What we have will do the job. There can still be variations in cockpits, seating, buoyancy, construction methods, and cost. Different interpretations are bound to arise to meet individual requirements but the principle of baths canoes is established.

My present basic canoeing course is having a whale of a time. Capsizing and paddling are fun. They are sculling, slapping and drawing with gay abandon. And to think that baths had hitherto been banned from canoeing because 14 footers wouldn't go through the door!

B.C.U. Approved Lifejackets

In the December issue of 'Canoeing in Britain' the following statement appears:

LIFEJACKETS — Council statement

The Council has given careful consideration to the policy of giving its approval to certain makes of Lifejacket in order to provide a suitable Lifejacket for canoeists at a price below that of the BSI kite-marked Lifejacket. Unfortunately, the BSI will not provide an inspection service for any Lifejacket which will not conform entirely to BSI standards. To provide a professional inspection service for the relatively small quantity of Lifejackets which would be needed by canoeists would make the BCU Approved Lifejacket cost as much as or even more than the BSI kite-marked Lifejacket.

The Council therefore feels that it is unable to continue to give its approval to any Lifejacket which is not made according to BSI specifications and subject to their inspection during manufacture.

Existing BCU Approved Lifejackets

The Council has been much concerned about canoeists who at present own and use the BCU Approved Lifejacket for use in inland waters. This Lifejacket is well designed and has been given practical tests by experts and pronounced perfectly satisfactory for use in inland waters. In inland waters members can safely use any Lifejacket which is the same as the kite-marked version but without the whistle, life-line and lifting becket. But the Council cannot accept responsibility for the quality of the material which must be a matter between the purchaser and the manufacturer.

No trouble has been reported from users of the BCU approved Lifejacket made by Messrs. Ottersports. However, there may be

a few who still have a jacket made of the faulty material accidentally issued by Messrs. Vacuum Reflex. This material is that of which the air container is made. It is a light yellow in colour and looks as though it is made of canvas. If anybody feels he may still have one of these (the faulty batch was made in February, 1966) the easiest way to check is to take the bottom of the front air bag in one hand and the webbing strap that goes round the waist in the other. Then give a sharp tug outwards. In sound lifejackets this tug will have no effect. In the faulty lifejackets the strap will tear away from the bag. Such lifejackets should be returned immediately to the suppliers. The others are sound and can be worn with full confidence.

BSI 3595 Lifejackets

Not all BSI 3595 kite-marked lifejackets are suitable for canoeing and canoeists are advised to ensure that any lifejacket they buy has the following characteristics:

- (a) Conforms to British Standard 3595.
- (b) Has an inherent (built-in) buoyancy of not less than 20 lbs and not more than 25 lbs.
- (c) Has provision for inflation by mouth to the full buoyancy.
- (d) Is compact enough not to impede paddling.

The General Secretary will keep a list of Lifejackets which have been recommended by the Safety Committee as conforming to the above specifications.

ERRATA

Council Statement on lifejackets, p. 114

Delete paragraph 2, insert:

The Council therefore feels that it will be unable indefinitely, to give its approval to any life jacket which does not bear the B.S.I. kite mark.

Paragraph 4, delete first sentence, insert:

No trouble has been reported from the B.C.U. Approved life jackets made by Messrs. Ottersports who have assured the Council that their product complies with the B.S.I. specification except for the whistle, life line, and lifting becket. This jacket will continue to carry B.C.U. approval in 1967.

In the same issue on a loose insert giving the agenda for the forthcoming B.C.U. A.G.M. the following errata appears:

We are pleased to be able to publish the above statement and although it contains elements of casuistry, canoeists, particularly the school teachers and youth leaders who have been the main purchasers of B.C.U. approved lifejackets, should now have a fairly clear idea of the position. We can only regret that it has taken so long for the air to clear around this vital topic.

Scottish Canoe Association 26th A.G.M.

BY MARIANNE TUCKER

The A.G.M. was held in Glasgow on the 4th December, and was attended by approximately 100 people. On the previous evening a most enjoyable dinner dance took place at the Cadora Restaurant organised by the Glasgow University C.C.

An interesting and diversified Agenda was laid before the meeting. Five new clubs and sections were accepted into membership, and an increase of approximately 22% in personal membership was reported.

During the evening the presentation of trophies took place including that for the 'Canoeist of the Year Trophy' which had been won by L.Bryce of the Kyle Canoe Club. This trophy is awarded for success in certain sprint, slalom and L.D. events, and requires all-round canoeing talent. Undoubtedly this does much to encourage an overall interest in the competitive side of our sport, but increasing specialisation may require certain revisions in years to come.

Space does not permit the listing of all the award winners, but the Editor has allowed me to mention Miss A. Green of Irvine C.C., winner of the Ladies' Singles Championship, a 16 year old with considerable potential.

Duncan Winning of 1 Ashburn Gardens, Gourock, Renfrewshire was again elected Secretary and would be delighted to hear from canoeists in Scotland who have not made contact with the S.C.A.

Letter to the Ministry of Transport

FROM GEOFF. SANDERS

In response to your recent request for information on the availability of canals, may I be allowed to present for your consideration some thoughts on the use of canals by canoeists.

1. Canoeing has grown rapidly in popularity since the war, but especially during the last ten years. Recent investigations, for example, suggest that in 1965 between 8 & 10,000 new canoes took to the water; a conservative estimate of the number of canoeists at the present time would seem to be about 50,000. It is generally agreed that canoeing is the type of healthy activity which we wish to encourage the young people of this country to take up and, indeed, a large and ever increasing number of youngsters in schools and youth groups are being introduced to the activity - many as part of their preparation for the Duke of Edinburgh Award. With such expansion in numbers the question of available canoeing waters in this country becomes critical.

2. Canals are used by canoeists for:-

a. Touring. Canals can be used for extensive tours, often in conjunction with rivers.

b. Competitive Training. Canals are often convenient for regular training practices, especially in the absence of local lakes or navigations.

c. Instruction. Canals are ideal for supervised sessions of basic instruction and for first 'expeditions' - and in this respect contribute greatly to the safety training of canoeists. Schools and youth groups would greatly welcome easier access to the canals for such purposes.

3. The cost of permits for canoes on canals are prohibitive. Few schools and youth clubs can afford the £2-10-0 per year per boat required by British Waterways. Young people who have recently left school or club but who wish to continue with their canoeing activities will similarly find the fees restrictive ... (£5 or £2-10-0 if locks are not used).

a. I believe that the recent White Paper on Transport, published in July 1966, commented that the preservation of existing facilities for recreational activities such as canoeing would, as a rule, give rise to little or no expenditure which could otherwise be avoided. (We are told, on the other hand, that the use of waterways by powered boats creates a different problem. British Waterways assert that the cost of issuing a canoe licence is the same as that for a large motor cruiser and therefore no great rebate is possible for the issue of canoe permits.)

b. I consider that the comparable fees of £12 for a 24ft. motor boat and £5 for an unpowered canoe are most unreasonable. I humbly submit that the position of the canoeist on the waterways should be likened to that of the cyclist on the highways and that no fees should be charged, provided that locks are not used.

c. If the principle cannot be accepted that all canoes have free access to canals, may it be suggested that:-

(i). youth organisations, schools and qualified canoe instructors may be entitled to obtain for a small fee, say 5/-, licence exemption passes. (Locks not to be used). The Thames Conservancy operate such a scheme and issue such passes for 5/-, which includes free lockage.

(ii). the standard rate be reduced to £1 per year per canoe.

Canoeing in Weymouth

BY M. J. BLUNDELL

The Dorset Coast is fascinating for canoeing and Weymouth, being a holiday resort, is an ideal centre for this activity.

Only recently has canoeing become popular at Weymouth. Interest was sparked off about two years ago when the Youth Activities Centre adopted canoeing as an "activity" for its members. Since then interest has grown and at present there is a waiting list of over thirty of those wishing to take classes. Obviously there is great need for a Canoe Club here.

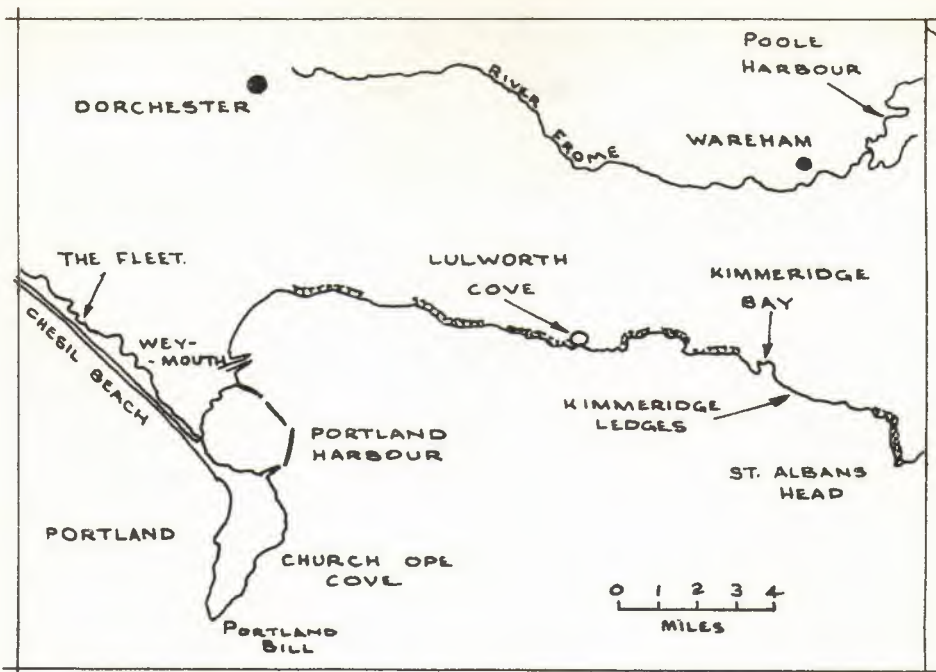
Weymouth Bay is safe, beautiful and ideal for touring by canoe. The only dangers are the headlands on each side of the bay - Portland Bill and St. Alban's Head - where strong tide rips occur on the flood and on the ebb but these disappear at slack water when, with luck with the weather, they may be negotiated. But it is always wise to avoid them.

The Eastern coast is the best part to tour. The cliffs are most spectacular, being sheer, tall and of limestone. In many places the sea has broken through to form a small cove the best known of these being at Lulworth - the cove here being almost circular. It is ideal for camping and makes a good stopping place for the night while on the way to Kimmeridge - further along the coast.

Kimmeridge is a shallow bay near St. Alban's Head and it can be distinguished by the ancient lighthouse which overlooks it from the high ground on the East. This is another good camping spot although permission must first be sought. It is very easy to land here because the beach consists of a number of shelving, overlapping rocks which form a number of natural slipways. On the eastern extremity are hard mud flats and these are known as Kimmeridge Ledges, their attraction being the surf which almost constantly breaks on them and when heavy waves are breaking it is common to see malibu surfers riding here.

The Western side of the Bay is a little less promising as it is mostly enclosed by Portland Harbour Breakwaters. However, it has the advantage of being safe in all weathers and is ideal for beginners. From Portland harbour; starting at Ferrybridge, a creek known as "The Fleet" runs parallel to the Chesil beach as far as Abbotsbury. It is tidal and very strong currents run, particularly at the entrance which is bridged by a roadway and a railway track, and river techniques must be used. This inlet is very beautiful and is easy to camp by being 8 miles long and averaging 300 yards wide - part of the western end, however, is reserved as a bird sanctuary.

Portland has all the appearances of being ideal for touring but landing presents a problem due to the surf which is almost continually breaking over the rocks. The method we adopt is for one of members (all of whom have wet-suits) to leave his canoe. His kit is then transferred to the other canoes when rafted-up, taking care not to capsize his canoe. He is then escorted in as far as possible by the others in the party and he swims the last



few yards to the rocks with his canoe, which he lifts out of the water, and then helps the others out of their canoes so that they do not touch the rocks. In this way it has been found that no capsizing or holed canoes have been suffered when landing on such a shore. The wearing of wet suits, particularly by the "pathfinder" is recommended for such an operation.

Most of the canoeing activity in Weymouth is centred on the beach. Surfing conditions occur about every month in the summer and every fortnight on average during the winter. Waves tend to average about 3ft in summer and 4ft in winter but may be over 8ft when an onshore gale is blowing. The waves tend to "dump" slightly (break in a rush) and we certainly get our share of loops and "pearl-divers". We find it best to stay well back up the wave and gradually weave down its face. These experiences are exciting and exhilarating and responsible for most of the interest in the sport here. We usually attract quite an audience, particularly among holidaymakers, when we surf on the beach.

By teaching our beginners to surf they learn the basic canoeing strokes such as telemarks, recovery strokes, and the sweep, much quicker and usually in about 3 weeks the average beginner uses these strokes instinctively on a wave. Many capsizes occur but the water is warm and their confidence in their canoes increases quickly and they are soon unafraid of a capsize and accept this as the rule rather than the exception. Consequently, the standard of our canoeing is reasonably high, even though the majority of us are under eighteen and we are in the process of forming a club - which we hope will be a great success.

(We would be pleased to receive similar descriptions of other canoeing centres from our readers. Ed.)

Rivers - a Case for Action

BY B. HORN

For several years canoeists have been discussing access problems and the poor position in which canoeing finds itself in this country, but with little result. There has been a constant worsening of relationships between canoeists and owner/fishermen on many rivers where the occasional canoeist had been welcomed or tolerated a decade ago there now exists a hostile attitude, e.g. Welsh Wye above Hay; points of access have been withdrawn and permission for passage refused, even on a localized stretch of river e.g. Ribble, Dinkley Ferry Slalom 1966 which had previously been an annual event. In the autumn, 1966, the British Canoe Union suggested ways in which the average canoeist could help the cause (1) They are mostly acceptable, but do not stir most of us into action. In earlier decades the ramblers were facing the possibility of bloodshed in their claim to rights of way on the Peak District moorland. Canoeists are not asked to go so far. A verbal or written pressure is required, focussed upon those with power to govern and if possible to rouse public opinion. Action infers doing, and this article is to suggest that the time for action exists until the new Countryside Act has been passed through Parliament. Mr. Fred Willey intends to introduce it next session. What arguments are there for making an all out effort?

One obvious fact is that time is running out. Failure to make an impact in favour of the canoeists case will mean a delay of several years, with accelerating problems, before there will be opportunity to try again. On this occasion the time lapse has been eighteen years, 1949-1967.

The public has a growing interest in water. The insatiable thirst of large conurbations has brought much publicity besides involving many areas of the country personally, (Liverpool v N. Wales, Manchester v Lake District, and recently TCI v Teasdale). The great rise in numbers participating in the range of other watersports (e.g. sailing, skiing, sub-aqua, Hydroplane rowing, fishing) has emphasised the need for expanding facilities. Holiday-makers on water may total as much as 30% of the numbers holidaying in this country (2). The awakening interest in the rejuvenation of the canal system, and the recent suggestion of city "marinas" has highlighted the inland waterways. Faced with this publicity the general public is probably ready to form an opinion rather than adopt the traditional English indifference. Will this be in favour of the canoeist?

Where rivers are concerned the claim is two-fold, for access points at regular intervals and the right of way throughout. The greatest resistance probably comes from the riparian landowners and fishermen. Where affable agreement existed it has either become strained, or failed altogether. Both parties feel canoeing to be "interfering" with their rights, the one from historical (fuedal?) sources, the other from the necessity of having to purchase his sport. The canoeist is claiming that his sport can justify a change in the law to his favour. To make such a far reaching claim the case must be examined carefully. Here are some of the arguments.

1. Whether a point in favour or not, it is worth re-iterating that this is the only country in Europe where rivers are not a public right of way (3). The canoeist would claim this as a logical development from considering them as natural resources rather than an individual property.

2. The ability of top competitive canoeists has earned international recognition (sprint - A.Wilson, Olympics 1964; L-D + WW, Sella river races, slalom, Farrant World Champion, Mitchells' present prestige and British Team performance). This is recognised in many countries, but apparently not our own. If canoeing has earned its place in modern international sport the government should recognise its needs. Many other sports receive indirect assistance through the use of public buildings or school facilities (e.g. athletics and swimming). Canoeing does not benefit in this way.

3. The growth of all sports which are encompassed by the new phrase "Outdoor Pursuits" has increased pressure for space water sports require more water space. There are about 208,000 acres of inland water in England and Wales, divided between Highland England 80,000 acres, Lowland England 96,500 acres and Wales 31,500 acres. In addition there is the coast. Only a slowly increasing minority of water authorities allow public access to their reservoirs (rate approx. two a year (4)). All this water may appear to negate the demand for expanding canoeing facilities. The problems of access are mainly on rivers in Highland England (S.W. peninsular and North of Lancs. - Yorks inclusive). The outsider sees canoeing as part of the fun of "messaging about in boats", which is acceptable on flat water. One of the fundamentals to canoeing is the movement of water (possibly except sprint racing). Touring has been the bread and butter of canoeing - in some factious it is canoeing - and rivers are used for training or relaxation by all forms of canoeing competition. How unfortunate that the flow of water is most exhilarating in the very areas where the problems of access are most grave.

4. "Access to rivers is by the banks, and difficulty of access represents a major obstacle to the development and use of river waters for recreational purposes." (5) This quotation is from a report on recreation in the West Midlands, which also points out that canoeists desire "passage along minor rivers where no clear rights of navigation exist". The statement is backed by an earlier report to the Ministry of Town and Country planning from the Footpaths and Access sub-committee (1947), which after stating that "River and Canals are by their nature primarily a means of passage" concluded that the then situation satisfied public requirements while accepting the two quotations the introduction to this article forcibly challenges their conclusion for 1967.

5. In 1960 the Wolferden Report made a clear call for the existence of suitable facilities for "outdoor activities", noting that, "many of these facilities now involved are where sports have traditionally been pursued in solitude or shared with a few companions only". (6) Having pointed out that the enlarging public was awakening to the benefits of private transport and longer holidays, the Report recommended that "more of the natural assets of our countryside should be accessible to those who will want to find healthy recreation there".

6. The National Parks and Countryside Commission, established by the Act in 1949 with part of their task, "to promote the provision of facilities for open air recreation within the Parks. (7).

The Parks are largely in the Highland areas of England. Agreements for walking and climbing, access with the associated provision of toilets, car parks and camping sites has greatly enhanced public use of these areas. Publicity advertises the various assets of each park, its moorland, historical attractions etc., but no provision for the canoeist on rivers. If access were granted to all N. Park rivers, which would be an acceptable start, many of the problem rivers would not be included. The following rivers are partly or wholly within a national park.

Brecon Beacons N.P. - Usk.

Yorkshire Dales N.P. - Wharfe, Ure, Swale, Part of Lune.

Lake District N.P. - Eawart, part of Eden. Many small exciting rivers.

Peak District N.P. Derbyshire Wye and Derwent etc. This leaves out the Welsh Dee, Eden, Lune Ribble upper Welsh Wye Tamar, Torridge, Taw, Exe etc., where canoeists have been denied access or encountered problems during passage. There are many more, especially those smaller tributaries where local areas can arrange one day/afternoon, novices weeks. Canoeists desire national access to rivers.

7. The argument that canoeing is a minority sport has ever decreasing value. The success of the B.C.U. coaching scheme indicates that numbers are increasing steadily, while there must be many canoeists in schools and youth groups who do not associate with the B.C.U. or affiliated clubs. The claim is for canoeing, not for the B.C.U. It seems probable from the figures recently published in "Canoeing" that the B.C.U. only represents a minority of canoeists in this country.(8). If about 10,000 new canoes take to the water in a year, there must be many more persons canoeing, and indicates the rate at which the sport is expanding.

8. The publicity associated with the Inland Waterways Association, in favour of canals, may detract from any public sympathy for widening the frontiers of river canoeing.

9. Articles in the press during the floods in Borrowdale and Langdale, autumn 1966, suggested that in some circumstances the riparian owners of a river may desire to pass financial responsibility for river bank maintenance onto local government or central government grant. If either form of government makes a contribution to these costs, as it may well be obliged to do in protection or repair of roads or other public services or ratepayers property, the public funds involved could result in a subsequent desire for a public "say" in the use of river. It could cease to be a private entity.

As the population in this country grows many groups of people with conflicting interests will become more involved with each other, and the English compromise is inevitable. The rights of the community as against the individual may lie within this concept rather than a feudal interpretation.

10. The government appears to be looking in two directions. Several committees have indicated that the recreational needs of the country require a change of policy, so far without result. Meanwhile the Department of Education and Science continue to encourage the development of "Outdoor Pursuits" within colleges and schools;

increasing further the demand on existing facilities. Is canoeing to be left out?

11. Incursions are made into the supply of moving water from building dams, often at the rapid stretches. This drowns part of the river and may dry the lower stretches to a level too shallow for canoeing. Pollution also prevents use of many rivers.

If these are some of the facts, what can be done? Although I would endorse the B.C.U. recommendations, I do not think they suggest enough.

1. Maintain contact with M.P.'s and local councilors. Place the facts in favour of canoeing access repeatedly before him. State all the facts, and personal experiences.

2. Maintain contact with as many representatives as possible on the Regional Sports Councils in the same way.

3. Publicise canoeing in all its forms as much as possible, but especially river canoeing. The suitability of slalom spirit racing and white water racing for T.V. presentation and a public spectator sport has yet to be exploited. Clubs could make more of a splash reporting their own activities in their local press.

4. The B.C.U. claims 3,000 members (9). All B.C.U. members could canvas. The B.C.U. should launch a campaign to enlarge its membership. The B.C.U. must take an enthusiastic lead.

5. The B.C.U. should build up its existing policy of recording "refusals of permission" and other problem, to be used as evidence.

Despite the obvious need for multirecreational use of water facilities, I believe that canoeing must concentrate solely upon its own case. Where rapid rivers are concerned, the main access problems etc., are up against fishing/landowners rather than other recreational activities. Arguments must match strength for strength - putting the case for co-operation could weaken the case and any share in the ultimate compromise. That is assuming canoeing wants a share.....

References

1. Canoeing in Britain, Autumn 1966
2. Outdoor Recreation in British Countryside, Burton and Willerby, 1965.
3. Letter to the Observer, June 5th, 1966.
4. Outdoor Recreation in British Countryside, Burton and Willerby, 1965.
5. Report on Inland Waters and Recreation for the Midlands, CCPR, 1964.
6. The Report of the Wolferden Committee - Sport in the Community, 1960.
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8. "Canoeing" Vol.7, No.1, December 1966.
9. Canoeing in Britain, Autumn 1966.

Letters

Dear Sir,

Deep Water Rescue Drills

I was very interested to read the article on Deep Water Rescue Drills by the Corps of Canoe Life Guards in your December edition.

It may be that the article in referring to "Mr. Stevenson's Method" gives the impression that the method was originated by me. The truth is that I had nothing to do with it, apart from reporting it to the National Coach.

This method of raft rescue was first done by the students at the Scottish Canoe Association's Course on Sea Canoeing at Inverclyde National Recreation Centre, Largs. It was the product of much experimentation on rescue drills by the students. It would be unfair to give the credit for this method to any one person, least of all to me.

Yours faithfully,
H.A.Y. Stevenson,
Kilburnie, Ayrshire.

Dear Sir,

Predicted Log Contests

The Kennet Valley Canoe Club inspired by your Editorial in the October issue of 'Canoeing' held a successful Predicted Log Contest. The results were as follows:

1. Anne Johnson. 2 mins. late (Sports Mermaid)
2. John Pugsley. 2½ mins. early (Folding Granta)
3. Nigel Weston. 8 mins. early (Moonraker 'S', Class 3)

We started a stopwatch 15 minutes before zero (at 3.30 p.m.) in order to get accurate times for those finishing both before and after 3.30.

We are running another contest over the same course in December as most people were well out in their time predictions.

Yours faithfully,
Jane Dadey,
Kennet Valley Canoe Club.

Dear Sir,

A Bouquet

I enclose my copies of 'Canoeing' for binding as arranged.

May I take this opportunity to compliment you on the quality of your magazine and your courageous and determined attitude in controversial matters.

Yours faithfully,
W.J. Keay,
Yorkshire Canoeing Association.

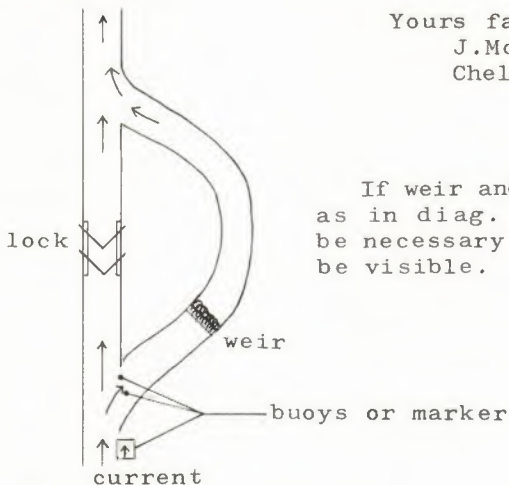
Dear Sir,

Better Signposts, Please

As you may know on the 23rd Oct. Chelmsford Boating Club held their Annual Junior L.D.R. on the river Chelmos. The Event went very well except for one incident.

A fisherman directed two competitors in a double canoe in the wrong direction, which resulted in them going over a weir, fortunately neither of them were hurt.

As the result of this I would like to suggest that clubs, before a race, put some sort of indication of the mouth of channels leading to weirs (as shown in diag.). This I think would be a great help to competitors, and also will prevent any more incidents as above happening.



Yours faithfully,
J. McKelvie
Chelmsford Boating Club.

If weir and lock are situated as in diag. a marker may not be necessary as the weir would be visible.

Dear Sir,

More Tests Please

I am enclosing renewal form and subscription for "Canoeing". While I find it a very readable magazine I feel that it could be even more interesting if more descriptions and tests of new craft and equipment were to be included. Judging from the advertisements a number of new canoes have been introduced during the last year and surely an expert's opinion of these would be helpful to anyone trying to choose a suitable model. I would also like to see more articles of a practical nature on home construction from scratch and from kits. One such article on the "Pacer" was very enjoyable but no one seems to know how it handles or how its performance compares with other boats in its class. A follow up article with test is indicated. The article on "Water Flea" was more complete in this sense.

I would also criticise some of Alan Bye's articles. He seems to have some good ideas but many are impracticable and do not "simplificate and add lightness". It would be helpful if he could try some of them out before writing about them.

Yours faithfully,
Maurice C. Evans,
Londonderry.

Dear Sir,

Scots Wha Hae

I have read 'Canoeing Complete' and I think it is the most comprehensive work on canoeing in this country but I would be dishonest if I did not say that I was very disappointed that there was no reference to the Scottish Canoe Association in the appendix.

I think that G.Sanders booklet "Canoeing For Schools and Youth Groups" is excellent but again no reference to the S.C.A.

Sorry if I sound as if I am on my hobby-horse but I take it that both these books are aimed at the whole U.K.

The British Canoe Union recognises the S.C.A. as the governing body of the sport in Scotland (Agreement signed in 1964). So surely the S.C.A. is entitled to a mention.

I realise that not much is heard from the S.C.A. but up until 1964 we paid most of our income straight over to the B.C.U.

Now that the financial arrangements are more sensible we are making headway and I hope you will hear a lot more of us in future.

With the controversy about lifejacket at its height I had a look back over my old copies of "Canoeing" and the numbers of photographs showing competitors wearing no lifejacket, deflated buoyancy aids etc. etc. is most disturbing. I am in no way suggesting this is a fault of the magazine, it is just a reflection of the situation.

Yours faithfully,
Duncan R. Winning,
Gourock, Scotland.

(Our sincere apologies to Duncan Winning and to all canoeists north of the border. With typical English arrogance we had overlooked the separate existence of the Scottish Canoe Association. For your Editor, at least, there is even less excuse since he spent the war years receiving a Scottish education where the Battle of Bannockburn was fought out again in the playground each day, and the popular song of the period was 'There'll always be an England as long as Scotland's there'. However, should either book run to a second edition we will make amends. Ed.)

Dear Sir,

Can Any Reader Help?

I wonder if you have any information about canoeing in Norway, or can put me in touch with any canoeist who first had experience?

I am particularly interested in white water rivers and small lakes which can be combined into a satisfactory trip. With so many rivers and lakes, and the longest rivers 300 miles long, surely there must be some good canoeing? The problem is to find the best waters, grading and possible difficulties.

Yours faithfully,
D.Boorne,
23 Jersey Avenue,
Cheltenham, Glos.

Dear Sir,

"It is a frightening thought"....

Your comment on the possible 50,000 canoes in Britain should remind us that even when we have access to all the rivers we want, we shall find many of them overcrowded with other water users - sailors, power boaters, water skiers, anglers, skin divers, rowers for example. We of course believe canoeing to be the best of the lot, but should we now ask ourselves whether it is right to go on encouraging all and sundry from schools and youth clubs to start canoeing? The sometimes bad reputation of canoeists among other water users is caused not by the real enthusiasts so much as by more reluctant canoeists who, because they are not really interested, become nuisances. The late Martin Rohleder at 10 years of age came to my door as a Wolf Cub to do a Bob-a-Job and was set to clean my canoe. From that moment he was a dedicated canoeist. The many "nuisance" canoeists are not of that calibre, but may be created through our pushing the sport. For example, it is well known that an inefficient schoolteacher may seize upon some extramural activity for prestige reasons, but may be found to be as inefficient with canoes as with the blackboard. Again, there are instances of better teachers having nearly to coerce children to go on expeditions, and I know of cases where a canoeing weekend is less unpopular than a mountaineering one because on a river there is usually a town at hand for Saturday night. Is it right to push these youngsters, and, much more important, are we really helping them for life?

It is perhaps a comforting thought that with the provision now being planned for more indoor sports halls and swimming pools, likely to be popular in these "softer" days, there may be less pressure on our precious natural resources.

Yours faithfully,
Kathleen Tootill,
Altrincham,
Cheshire.

BOUND VOLUMES OF 'CANOEING'

Orders for the bound copies of Volume 6 of 'Canoeing' (complete with index) were dispatched during the week beginning 9th January. Any readers who ordered copies and who have not received them should contact our Circulation Manager, Canoeing Publications, 6 The Mall, Brentford, Middlesex.

We now have in stock bound copies of Volumes 5 and 6 of 'Canoeing' and these are available from the Circulation Manager price 25s. per volume (Post free).

We also have the following publications available:
Canoeing for schools and youth groups, by Geoff. Sanders. Price 6s.
Slalom and white water course. Price 3s.6d.
Canoeist's map of Ireland. Price 3s.

(All the above are post free)

News Flashes

OTTERSPOUNTS LIFEJACKETS

We learn that Messrs. Ottersports have received B.S.I. approval for their lifejacket. A B.C.U. approved lifejacket of identical design and materials but without a whistle, lifeline, and lifting becket is available, and Messrs. Ottersports give an absolute guarantee that this lifejacket differs only from the B.S.I. model in that it is not equipped with the three items mentioned. Ottersports lifejackets have also received the approval of the National Schools Sailing Association.

CCPR SPORTS COACHING COURSES 1967

The prospectus for the 1967 CCPR coaching courses is now available from CCPR Headquarters, 26 Park Crescent, London W.1. (no charge but enclose a Stamped Addressed Envelope). The courses cover 35 activities at 11 centres and the charge for most courses is between £11.10s. and £15 per week which includes board accommodation, equipment and instruction. Definitely the year's best holiday buy.

REPORT YOUR LOSSES

John Brown, Chairman of Birmingham C.C., reports an incident worthy of wide circulation. Briefly, on a recent cruise a canoe was wrecked beyond recovery and abandoned. Subsequently, the wreck drifted to the bank, was reported to the police who mounted a sizeable search operation. As John points out, a timely word from the canoeists to the people could have prevented their fruitless and frustrating efforts, yet NOBODY (himself included) thought about it. The moral of this story is obvious, and yet it is a point we cannot recall having seen in print before.

RIVER WYE CRUISING

From April onwards the Y.H.A. are offering weekly cruises down the Wye from Staunton to Tintern. Accommodation is at Youth Hostels and the cost is £12.0.0. per head, further details from the Y.H.A. Trevelyan House, St. Albans, Herts.

GRANTA IN NEW YORK

Mr. A.S. Cavender of Granta Boats tells us that they will be exhibiting their canoes on the British Stand at the New York Boat Show this month.

WE COULDN'T BUT THEY DID

Just as we go to press the latest copy of 'White Water' magazine has come in. Amongst the articles is a multiple test report of white water canoes, just the sort of thing we wrote about in our current Editorial. White Water is a quarterly costing 10s. per annum (post free) from Maurice Rothwell, 21 Windsor Road, Manchester 10.

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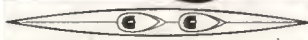
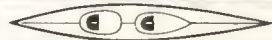


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