

CoDe

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British Canoe Union
Coaching Scheme



CoDe is the official organ of the BCU Coaching Scheme. Members are free to express their views within its pages. Articles and comments therefore reflect the authors' thoughts and do not necessarily state the policy of the National Coaching Committee.

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Contributions, including pictures, are welcome. Send to: The Editor, CoDe, BCU, 45 High Street, Addlestone, Surrey, KT15 1JV.

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Editorial

This edition of CoDe regretfully carries the full account of the death of an instructor. Michael Watkinson drowned on Kempston Weir at Bedford whilst attempting to save the life of a student for whom he was responsible.

Two salutary questions are raised by this fatality, which are referred to in the article.

By coincidence, a symposium on white water rescue techniques was held during the weekend following the inquest. For immediate consumption from this forum it is recommended that Trainee Instructors be given firm guidance in the carrying and use of a throw line. This should include the importance of a) being belayed - if not you will be pulled in by the victim; and b) ensuring that you are able to release immediately in any situation.

Considerable concern was expressed by some delegates about the hap-hazard use of tow lines. The importance of a candidate practising with his/her favoured rescue system in a variety of situations, and not tying on when the circumstances are unfavourable should be emphasised.

White Water Rescue Techniques Conference

Aided by generous sponsorship from Wild Water Centre, a small group of paddlers highly experienced in experimenting with ideas and training others in white water rescue techniques, met at Plas y Brenin from 7-8 September. The Symposium was led by Mark Attenburrow who has organised the safety cover for the Arctic Canoe Races. Peter Midwood, Chairman of the White Water Safety Working Party which is updating the recommendations in the B.S.I. Specification for Safety Features Canoes (BS MA 91) for white water use, gave a resume of the stage reached by this panel.

The symposium also received special input from Ray Rowe of Plas y Brenin, who spent a month on the Continent earlier in the year on a Mike Jones scholarship, in order to research the subject, and Colin Tees, who developed the chest harness now produced as an integral buoyancy aid by Wild Water.

The group experimented with the commonly-taught rescue methods, besides discussing new innovations. A full report will be produced for November CoDe or December Focus. Recommendations will be going to the National Coaching Committee, once agreement is reached on further input from delegates on: the setting out of a syllabus for a standard one-day course in white water rescue techniques; considering the level of rescue knowledge and ability necessary for advanced proficiency level; and the production of comprehensive guidance notes on white water rescue.

TURNING AND SKIDDING - THE CONCEPTS by LES BERROW

The majority of canoes in use today are slalom type kayaks and most people's first attempts at canoeing will be in one of these. The over-riding first impression of beginners is that "they go round in circles". To be told that their canoe is designed to be fast turning and highly manoeuvrable is but little consolation to the beginner who simply wants to be able to "go straight". Although paddling a canoe seems very simple, and some kind of forward movement is easily achieved, there is really quite a lot to teach the beginner. How then can we sustain the initial enthusiasm and eliminate the endless circling.

The experienced canoeist does not have a problem keeping his/her canoe running straight, simply because he/she has learned an efficient paddling technique and, most importantly, he/she reacts quickly to any tendency of the canoe to stray off course. It is this quick reaction, in fact a conditioned reflex, that our beginners really need but, like other conditioned reflexes, it takes a lot of practice to achieve.

I believe that the beginner should be taught to understand what is happening and to this effect I first introduced the concept of "The Turning Effect of the Forward Paddling Stroke". The concept here is that you can maximise the turning effect of the stroke by "sweeping" the paddle round in a wide "arc" (a sweep stroke) or minimise the turning effect by keeping the paddle very close to the side of the canoe (good forward paddling technique).

Depending on the group this "concept" can be discovered by demonstration or questions (converted into suitably simple language). It is, of course, a way of introducing forward sweep strokes, which are the correct way to change course and a vital skill if the beginners are to go quickly on to moving water. The principle that paddling on the right makes the canoe turn left and vice versa is very easily discovered but the sweep stroke is not usually picked up without some teaching.

"A little knowledge" being what it is, our beginners are now veering about (as if to avoid submarines!) as a result of over correction, late correction and poor sweep strokes. At this point in the learning progression we could spend many hours improving the vital skills of forward paddling by further coaching and correction or simple games. It is important to avoid boredom for the able and frustration for the less able.

Therefore, at a suitable point, I introduce the concept of "skidding". This can be done by a simple demonstration, "Watch my canoe when I stop paddling". No special technique is needed to induce the skid but the challenge is to get the key word, "skid" from the group. Most people are familiar with the skidding motor car from films and television and can see that a canoe behaves in a somewhat similar fashion. However, the concept is introduced, not as a way of teaching a mistake, but simply as normal behaviour from the canoe and as a lead into correcting the skid. It should be pointed out that "slouching", or leaning back, makes the canoe more prone to skidding. The beginners canoe starts an involuntary skid when uneven paddling is followed by poor efforts at correction or over correction, and, once skidding, it is hard to bring the canoe back on course with forward sweep strokes.

To stop the skid we simply place the paddle in a stern rudder position keeping the paddle parallel to the canoe. The aim is to stop the skid and conserve forward momentum, not to use the 'rudder' to turn the canoe. The technique is simple and readily learned but the paddler must brace themselves in the canoe as correcting a violent skid can cause quite a lurch. Problems are sometimes experienced in deciding on which side to place the paddle. This can be taught as a demonstration where the group call out left or right as the instructor skids.

The idea of saving momentum by avoiding the spin is attractive and fairly easily grasped, so that the practice involves making the canoe glide along straight for as long as possible, after just a few strokes. Any faults in the technique become obvious and correction is fairly straight forward.

It should be emphasised that this technique is not a braking or reverse sweep stroke. Negative correction strokes are to be avoided especially if the group is to progress on to moving water (and why paddle slalom boats if they are not). The sequence of strokes to bring the canoe back on course should be, first a good forward sweep stroke then, if this fails, the paddle should be quickly moved across to the opposite side of the canoe and our "stop-skid sternrudder" employed. As soon as the skid has been checked the canoe is brought back on course with a forward sweep, and the rhythm of paddling continued.

Many beginners work out for themselves the technique of using a reverse stroke to stop the canoe turning. On placid water this is simply inefficient, but on moving water the effect of a reverse stroke is usually to start a reverse ferry glide, and always in the wrong direction. It is worth explaining this effect when teaching breakouts.

There is also a tendency, for the canoe to skid in the eddy after a breakout. In this situation a draw stroke is effective in controlling the boat. The classic technique for breaking out with precision is the bow rudder but it is interesting to see how many intermediate canoeists do a kind of draw stroke believing that they are performing a bow-rudder. Perhaps the best way to improve precise handling is to practise slalom gates on flat or preferably on moving water. The poles provide fixed points of reference and any sliding of skidding is immediately obvious.

We should not leave the subject of stern rudders however without reference to their main use, in surfing or riding any kind of wave. The technique of steering down a wave can be taught and practised on quite small waves, on any open water. Sometimes almost the only fun to be had on a windy day is trying to catch a ride on a wave.

Two alternative solutions to the beginners problems should also be mentioned. We could use straight-running canoes, if we could afford two sets of equipment. Or we could fit skegs to our existing canoes. The latter solution has some merit, especially for the very young and impatient beginner, but it does prevent the boat from being "parked" stern first on a beach while the instructor is talking to the group (my favourite "group control" solution).

I have found this (the skid-stopping) method useful for enabling a group of absolute beginners to achieve a worthwhile journey ("across the lock" or "round the Island"). I felt that some instructors spend too much time coaching the group and give the beginners insufficient practise. Canoeing really is an easy skill, it should "come naturally" with the minimum technical information.



Dear CoDe

I have read with interest the varying suggestions re Revalidation arising from Franco Ferrero's original letter on the subject.

May I put forward an alternative word, an alternative approach, albeit oulled from a different discipline. Some might feel that BASI (the British Association of Ski Instructors) is perhaps the most exciting (and expensive!) of all the instructor qualifications to gain, yet even they do not require you to be re-assessed, revalidated every so often. What they require is that you undertake a Refresher Course every three or four years to keep abreast of developments and new thinking. I suppose if you were to show yourself thoroughly incompetent at one of these they would demand some form of re-assessment - or even rescind your licence - but the emphasis is on a Refresher, polishing up technique, ironing out faults that may have crept in, catching up on developments rather than the awful stick of having to take the exam again in some form or another. A subtle but significant distinction.

To illustrate personally, if I may: as an active paddler forced by virtue of recent location and circumstance temporarily to retire, I for one would welcome Refresher Courses on returning actively to the sport. On the other hand, I might well conclude that to undergo all the hassle, nervous energy and general aggravation required of reassessment/validation was not really worth it, when, hopefully given a move back to the sea (or even some decent rivers!) I would feel I still had something to offer the sport.

I would suggest that Refresher Courses would be a more positive and valuable approach, avoiding the emotive and abrasive issue of revalidation/assessment.

BOB SHEPTON (Rev) - Oxford

Dear CoDe

Peter Lamont's comments on weathercocking, which followed from my previous explanation confuse several points - this is partly my fault because I was trying to keep things simple: I was talking about weathercocking due to wind and forward paddling only. The effects of waves on the direction of a boat are quite another matter.

Although it appears at first sight that only wind/speed/paddling speed/wind direction will allow a non-ruddered boat to travel true, this is not so.

Peter's assumption that the wind effect is geometrical, is not true. There is a wide range of wind speed/direction when the boat will run true and the explanation is a little more complicated than the simplified version I gave last time. It is akin to the fact that a rudder exerts a maximum turning force at a given angle and not a maximum angle. More than a 35° angle and the braking effect increases with a loss of turning effect. Again the lift on an aircraft wing is not geometric; as we know, there is a point where the increase in angle creates stall conditions and there is a dramatic loss of lift. Neither of these two points is the complete answer, but they point the way.

In practice, the design of a kayak hull is a subtle combination of many factors, as I know from the hundreds of hours I've spent trying to reconcile them. I couldn't understand the points about "Variations in course will not be discernable because of developing waves" or "The boat will attempt naturally to take a course of 90° to the wind" I don't think I'm claiming something that isn't true - it is because the Nordkapp holds 'true o' the wind' so well that it has been chosen for so many major trips by so many people.

The reason I didn't mention retractable skegs is because they didn't seem relevant to the point of my letter. But aren't they really a thing of the past? Skegs have been around for a long time - long before I became interested in kayak design - but I think I can lay claim for making one of the early glass-fibre slip-on-skegs. There was an article in Canoeing in Britain Magazine about 1967 if you go back that far! By 1970 I was producing a retractable skeg that was available commercially, and could be fitted to any boat as it was made. We did quite a lot of these - fitting them to high volume slalom boats and longer boats like the Cadet (now forgotten I guess) and everyone said these were the answer. In fact, when we started bringing out 'long, straight-keeled sea-boats' people said they'd never catch on. Even the pundits at Plas y Brenin said that short boats with variable skegs were the best - yet within a year or two they were all paddling long thin boats.

A variable skeg is only a half-way stage to a proper rudder. Rudders fell out of fashion because they were susceptible to damage. Modern materials and new designs can now give us rudders that are much more reliable - hence my thinking in recently designing a more manoeuvrable sea-boat and adding a sea-going rudder ... but let me add a cautionary tale - I've just come back from a 'sea-paddling' trip on the Great Lakes in the USA and Canada and we were delayed for a whole hour one day cleaning sand out of a jammed rudder system - yes, one of mine! It's a good job there are no tides to miss on Lake Superior.

Some of us old lags have had a lot of amusement recently from people who are talking about old concepts as though they are brand new. Dave Green's recent letter in the canoeing press having a giggle at those who think that canoe design began last year has the point precisely. Wind and water don't change, only fashions of paddling do. No doubt it'll go round and round in circles, advocates of different styles boring us all with what they think is best! We stopped making retractable skegs over a decade ago because there was no demand ... if the fashion changes, we'll start again. No doubt we'll do as well as we can, but the poor paddler will always have to put up with imperfect design - it'll never come absolutely right - that's the fun !

FRANK GOODMAN - Valley Canoe Products

Dear CoDe

Mr E Compton gives advice to those paddlers who suffer from tenosynovitis. He omits to mention that unfeathered paddles are very much less likely to give the paddler a wrist that creaks like a flying swan.

A great many great paddlers used unfeathered paddles until the turn of this century when canoeing as a popular sport died out, to give place to cycling in Edwardian days. (see 'Rushton and his Times in American Canoeing')

Why do we use paddles that are feathered? Answer, to reduce forward wind resistance against the paddle blade which is returning through the air ready for the next stroke. The spade blade concentrates the area of the blade at the furthest end of a long shaft, where it can exert maximum moment, or leverage. Then why do we have spade blades at the end of long shafts?

Compare the Greenland eskimo seal hunters' paddle for length, relative to the paddler, against the European spade blade. They are the same. The centre of pressure of the hunter's paddle is nearer to the paddler's hand than is that of the European. The area of the seal hunter's paddle is 75% of the slalom paddle. The eskimo paddle is unfeathered. Air resistance of the long thin blade as against the spade blade is in the region of 75% (area) x 75% (leverage) of 56% overall air resistance. The seal hunter paddled sixty miles a day, day after day, sometimes towing one of two carcasses, if he had been successful.

In 1966 Chris Hare took some European paddles as gifts, the best he could find. The seal hunters rejected them as noisy and unsuitable for their purposes. (Igdlorssuit, Ubekendt Ijland, Greenland.)

If old mother nature had decreed, through survival of the fittest, that spade blades were better than eskimo blades, then seal hunters would have had spade blades before Nero allowed Rome to burn. The native builder could make spade blades if he wanted to do so.

Consider the coracle paddle. There is only one coracle that uses a spade blade, and that is at Ironbridge on the Severn (shallow). I have no record of the paddle shape of the Spey timber hauling coracles of the 18th century. They were used on shallow waters so may have had spade blades. All the rest without exception have long thin blades, used on deep waters, usually estuarial.

Last weekend I tried out a Canadian canoe design and used long thin coracle blades. Very satisfactory. Action very close to the side of the hull. Deep water at York.

The resurgence of canoeing as a popular sport around the mid-fifties was centered on shorter kayaks suitable for use on fast moving water, typically found on shallow rivers. Survival of the fittest decreed that shallow waters require spade blades, and so rough water paddlers must have short fat blades at the end of long poles.

It is on fast moving shallow waters that the paddle maker finds his business booming. Busted paddles litter the ground at slaloms. So, as demand increased, it was typically among shallow water paddlers, that business was best. Competition among paddle makers ensured that prices were kept reasonable, and that the quality was high. So the bestest, mostest, cheapest paddles were suitable for shallow waters. The others took them as there was no alternative.

In 1969 I asked Collars, the oar and spar makers at Oxford, to make me an eskimo paddle to the drawing that Geoff Blackford had done for the magazine 'Canoeing' in 1966 (I think). I still have it. It is robust beyond my needs, and suitable for my purposes (mostly deep water). It is unfeathered and light and I can cruise as fast as anyone using spade blades.

Now we have many deep water paddlers and they are asking the question 'Why?' Modesty does not forbid me to remark that I am usually ten years to twenty years ahead of my time, so take up the eskimo paddle brother, you have a lot of joy to catch up on. Unfeathered of course. The only reason I can write so many long letters to bore the breeches off you creaky-wrist brigade is that I no longer suffer from tenosynovitis. (Who said my partner in the double pulls me along? Black mark).

ALAN BYDE, Middleton in Teesdale

CANOEING FOR PERSONS WHO ARE DISABLED

The Training of Instructors and Helpers

Recommendations concerning an endorsement system for the training and formal recognition of those willing to help persons who are disabled, are to be put to the next meeting of the National Coaching Committee.

This follows the deliberations of a small Working Party.

On Sunday, 10 November, a meeting has been arranged which is open to all BCU examiners who have run courses for the training of Instructors and helpers in this field. This meeting will be held in Nottingham.

At the meeting it is planned to agree the syllabus for approved courses, and to establish a register of those initially approved to run them.

If you are experienced in the running of such courses and wish to be considered for recognition would you please confirm with the Director of Coaching straight away. You will be invited to the meeting and sent the draft syllabus, in advance, for your comments.

The Working Party are not recommending a formal "qualification". They are suggesting that those who fulfil certain criteria, and successfully complete an approved training course, will be endorsed to the effect that they have received training designed to give them a "awareness" of the special problems, and consequent enhanced requirement for safety provision and group control, which are inherent in teaching persons who are disabled to canoe.

Dear CoDe,

Please could you answer the following question which has been bothering the TIs at our club and myself (an SI) for some time.

Our question is one concerning the differences in standards between the placid water and white water/sea coaching schemes.

Why is it, that a placid water senior instructor has only to obtain the canoe safety test, whereas the white water and sea senior instructors have to struggle in some cases, and in all cases work extremely hard to obtain the BCU life saving test or RLSS bronze medallion.

This seems ridiculous to us as we believe that if a person is going to drown he will do so with equal vigour and success whatever the water conditions.

The argument put to us by a member of the placid water scheme was that the lower level of award required reflects the water conditions involved. This is the poorest of excuses. After all, the Bronze Medallion (in the words of the Royal Life Saving Society), has the following objective: "A candidate must satisfy the examiner that they could effect a rescue in open water". This does not say in what water conditions.

PETER VENUS - Ardale Community Home

Director of Coaching Comments: The White Water or Sea Senior Instructor, by the nature of the activities which he or she pursues has essentially to be self-sufficient - a built-in rescue unit providing the total safety cover. This is not true to the same degree for the Placid Water Senior Instructor.

The Placid Water Senior Instructor is a different animal, performing a different function, and working in a different environment from the White Water or Sea Senior Instructor. However, his or her level of personal ability in the type of craft and environment involved, was reckoned to merit the term "Senior Instructor", rather than invent a new title.

Whilst it is true that all water can drown, it is also true that the Placid Water Senior Instructor will be working on the type of water, and in the type of craft, in and from which we know from statistics that the risk of drowning is greatly reduced.

A fair proportion of the candidates will be coming from a background of long involvement in the sport where qualifications have traditionally had little credibility. To impose an artificially high requirement would only detract from the likelihood of their entering the Scheme. It is surely to everyone's advantage that they are encouraged to identify with the system, and in consequence obtain at least a basic lifesaving skill, besides benefitting from the shared experience and knowledge which coaching qualification courses provide.

Dear CoDe,

Would you clarify whether or not footrests ought to be fitted in general purpose slalom type kayaks when being used for an inland proficiency test. My own view is that they are an essential fitment for the following reasons:

1) Efficiency - better dynamic seating position for all strokes, including of course, basic forward paddling.

2) Safety - here in the East Midlands Grade I-II river trips often involve shooting weirs of various type. I was once involved in a fairly desperate rescue of a lad (in someone else's group I hasten to add) who in shooting a weir hit another kayak stuck in the stopper, causing him to come off his seat and become jammed in his boat which filled and submerged leaving only his head and shoulders above water.

3) Preparation for the future - hopefully having gained his or her proficiency award the paddler will go on to be able to handle bigger water and perhaps try surfing. If he or she has not had the need for a footrest impressed upon him or her at the proficiency stage, when will that paddler, before he or she is involved in an accident?

As I know there are people passing proficiency candidates and running courses to proficiency level without insisting on footrests being fitted, I would be very interested in your comments and opinions.

MRS K WRIGHT - Nottingham

Director of Coaching Comments: I would not be prepared to state that lack of a footrest in itself is a fail factor for proficiency test purposes, but do agree with you that unless certain provisions have been made in the boat, then the paddler is at some risk, even on easy white water, and certainly on small surf.

There are, however, a number of very sound paddlers who do not bother with footrests.

If there is no footrest, and in the event of a collision with a rock, or the beach, the paddler would clearly end up jammed in the kayak, then a stern warning concerning this should be given to the candidate.

I will refer the matter to the moderating forum at the annual conference to see if the consensus view is stronger than this.

Dear CoDe,

In July 1983 I attended a slalom competition trainer course held at Luddington near Stratford on Avon, to which I must say I owe a great deal as to the change in my canoeing experiences. Although most people would say it only covered the pure basics of competition instruction, I can assure them that basics are the essential part of any activity.

In June 1984 I changed canoe clubs and joined Kinver Canoe Club a very young group of people mainly scouts, guides majority age group from 10 to 16 year olds of which only 6 were active slalomists. After a few months, I settled in to take control of the slalom activities, which began on a dis-used stretch of canal. I have found that canoeists paddling non moving water learn far quicker, gain good paddling technique, body position, body movement and most of all concentration and discipline. We marked the canal out in sections of 50, 75, 100 and 125 metres for sprinting (not timing at first) till good technique was reached, some would straighten out in two weeks others took at least six weeks but eventually all achieve the standards I set.

From November to March I began a circuit training session once a week which was attended regularly by 15 enthusiastic teenagers. By February I ran two weekend slalom sessions at the West Midland Centre at Luddington in really cold snowy weather but again all attended. Each receiving instruction on all gate techniques finishing up with a fun club slalom competition. By March we had attended three slaloms run at Stafford and Stone with newcomers getting used to competitions to see if they would enjoy it, by now some looking for better equipment.

Once again I started canal training in Mid February sprints and onto gate practice, luckily we had a road bridge over the canal which has railings from which we suspended four gates, using different sequences all timed and moving onto multiple sets, giving the paddlers on edge on stamina and gate work.

The 1985 season began in March at first only a few taking part due to the weather etc. but with an initial squad of 14 novices, 2 div. 4, 3 div. 3 and div. 2 (1 myself) I had a feeling that most would soon be doing well, but I must admit, I was astounded at the immediate success all grades of paddlers achieved. It is now early July and the results read 11 Novice, 8 Div 4, 2 Div. 3 and 6 Div 2 but not all are competing at BCU Slaloms. I have been encouraging some to gain more experience at Regional Events this year and take on the great unknown next season. Prizes have amassed to an unbelievable total of 53 and 16 promotions, one a complete novice in March now a Division 2 paddler who is only 14 but his results have at times even frightened me.

Of course it is not all plain sailing some paddlers need a good talking to at times to put them in their place. Some try it on and it becomes more of a challenge to slowly knock them into shape, others have peculiar habits and some just need a softer approach and some guidance. My job has been greatly enhanced by nearly all parents, giving lifts, helping timing, checking penalties and making equipment so that their kids get the most out of the situation we have.

Some parents have even passed their Grade C judges exam keeping a good interest. The only snag to coaching in such a way is that your own training has to suffer, but next season I will probably reduce myself to a veteran paddler and still enjoy it.

B Better
A Ability
S Strength
I In
C Canoeing, means
S Success.

I think you will agree, just one weekend, proved to be very well worth it, unfortunately when meeting others who were on the course, not many put the instruction to use after that weekend. I hope you don't mind me blowing my own trumpet but in CoDe you did ask us to let you know how we get on with our coaching.

COLIN BROUGHTON, Stourbridge.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

YOUTH WORKER Part-time (JNC Range 3, 20 hours pro rata). Climbing or Canoeing skills. Full driving licence essential. Application forms available from Belgrave Playhouse, 132 Harrison Road, Leicester LE4 6BS. (0533 681423). Closing date 25 October 1985.

DALGUISE CENTRE - Permanent and temporary Instructors required. Dalguise Centre is one of Scotland's leading providers of residential courses for school groups, YTS and apprentices. The work is challenging and demanding, requiring a thorough understanding of young people as well as the ability to instruct outdoor skills at varying levels. We require temporary staff throughout the year and would like to hear from experienced instructors available to help for periods of one week to three months duration. We also require permanent staff to start 1 February 1986. Candidates should have experience of YTS work and as a minimum qualification SI Inland and a driving licence. Rock climbing and ropework skills are also essential. Interviews in December. Further details and application forms from The Manager, Dalguise Centre, Dunkeld, Perthshire, PH8 0JX.

CANOEING INSTRUCTOR required, preferably with sailing and/or climbing skills, from April - September 1986 at The Ranch, (Christian Centre for Youth and Handicapped Groups), Llanbedr, Gwynedd, North Wales. (034.123.358).

KEN GULLIVER

A Tribute - by JACK TRAVERS

Ken Gulliver, Regional Coaching Organiser for the South East since 1983 and recently appointed as a part-time National Coaching and Development Officer, died in July whilst undergoing an operation.

In general members of the BCU Coaching Scheme are of a high standard both in personal performance and instructing ability. But to reach the peak and then remain at the top for over twenty years requires exceptional qualities. Such qualities were the perquisite of Ken Gulliver, who died so unexpectedly. Ken will best be remembered in canoeing circles as a coach, RCO for the South East and the warden and chief instructor at the Outdoor Pursuits Centre at Burwash Place, where he was appointed warden at the age of 30.

Educated at Saltley Grammar School, Birmingham, Ken's main interests were in sport and outdoor activities. Small wonder then that on being called up for National Service in 1947 into the Royal Air Force he was posted to the Physical Fitness Section. On his return to civilian life he went first to St. Peters College, Birmingham, specialising in physical education and then to St. Luke's College, Exeter, where he obtained a Diploma in Physical Education. Straight from university he went into the teaching profession and at the age of 24 he was a housemaster at the Royal Merchant Navy School. Here he was able to widen his love of the outdoors to include water activities. His summer vacations were spent largely as a sailing instructor running courses for the CCPR. Later he took up climbing and for a number of years from 1957 was a mountain instructor for the CCPR at Plas y Brenin.

Hundreds of students, both adult and children, passed through the doors of Burwash Place. Each and every one left the richer for having met Ken. Only maximum effort was acceptable from student and instructor alike from breakfast until the last piece of equipment had been cleaned, inspected and put away. He ran a tight ship.

Even on leave Ken did not allow himself to cease trying to improve on his own expertise. Most summer holidays saw him take some of his instructing staff to France to practice on white water and the big surf of the Atlantic coast. And yet the predominant sound on these expeditions, as also at Burwash Place, was laughter. Academically he continued to drive himself and was awarded a BED degree by the University of Sussex in 1981.

To possess a keen and natural sense of humour is a great asset. Ken's face appeared to wear a perpetual grin. To reminisce with him usually meant to recall anecdote after anecdote. Only men of outstanding quality can combine ability, discipline and humour in the right proportions to inspire the student to produce his best at all times. Such was his personality that Ken achieved this time and again with his courses.

It was regrettable that the cut in educational expenditure forced the closure of Burwash Place in 1981, and his transfer as Deputy Head to a Residential Education Centre. This unfortunately coincided with a breakdown in his health. In spite of this he still continued to serve the Union as Regional Coaching Organiser and Vice-Chairman for the South East Region.

He will be remembered by all who worked with him with respect, affection and gratitude.

OPEN CANOE COACHING CLINIC

An Open Canoe Coaching Clinic and Poling Contest will take place at Bolton on 18-20 October.

The weekend will be devoted to the coaching of white water techniques in the open canoe. George Steed, from Wolf River Lodge, Wisconsin, will be leading this clinic, which will include the first ever British up-stream Poling Championships!

Send to S Briggs, 127 Church Rd, Stretton, Burton on Trent, for full details.

STOP THE PRESS STOP THE PRESS STOP THE PRESS STOP THE PRESS STOP STOP THE PRESS STOP

ANOTHER EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

British Rail Student Training Scheme

BR Student Training Scheme requires a person qualified in canoeing, with walking and climbing, and some administrative and organisational ability to assist in running the Scheme. Contract renewable annually. Salary £6,000-£6,500 pa. For application details contact Mr Davis on 0325 467491 immediately.

The inquest has now been held into the death of Michael Watkinson, a 28 year old Instructor. On Friday 7 June, Michael, a teacher at Ashton Middle School, Dunstable, took a group of seven boys aged 12-14, and an adult female helper, onto the River Ouse at Kempston. Some of the boys had canoed previously more than others, but none were at proficiency level.

The intention of the session was to proceed upstream to Kempston Weir to practise ferry gliding in the faster current downstream of the weir. The river was higher than the summer norm, but was quite suitable for novice canoeists under instruction.

An initial practise took place on easy water. During the journey upstream, one boy capsized on a shallow section. Michael Watkinson took over the rescue and sent another boy - the best canoeist in the group - to tell the others who had gone on, to wait at the bridge, whilst he caught up together with the capsize victim. The bridge was about half way between the egress point and the weir, the total journey being about 3/4 of a mile.

This message did not appear to have reached everyone in the group, and the subsequent pattern of events was not made clear during the enquiry. Some boys waited at the bridge with the adult helper, whose personal canoeing ability was limited. Her main function was to provide a second adult in the Transit to conform to County Regulations for transporting school children. Certainly for a period she stayed at the bridge with some of the group, then moved on with them towards the weir.

The boy who was given the message to convey, also ended up in trouble at the weir, ahead of Michael Watkinson!

On reaching the weir, three boys at first held on to a gauging post, some 33 feet from the weir. They then allowed themselves to drift in to the point where the tow-back was operating - probably about 20 feet from the fall. When one or two were drawn up to the weir and capsized, others went to their aid so that when Michael Watkinson arrived on the scene four boys and boats were in the stopper.

The adult helper and other boys managed to extricate all but one victim, by reaching them with paddles from the bank.

One boy, however, was still being churned around, together with some kayaks. Michael Watkinson, having failed to reach him with a paddle, and a branch, finally leapt in above the weir in an effort to extricate him. He was also churned around in the stopper, however, and there is evidence that he received a blow to the head from one of the kayaks, after which he "turned purple" and appeared lifeless. The boy remaining in the stopper, whom he had sought to rescue, was then reached with a paddle and pulled free.

P.C. Habermehl and others had arrived on the scene. A lifebuoy was brought from down stream, and P.C. Habermehl jumped in with this around him. He was pulled free, bringing Michael Watkinson with him. The rope attached to the buoy breaking at one stage during this operation! Resuscitation was applied, which continued until the ambulance arrived, and Michael Watkinson was transferred to the hospital where he was declared dead.

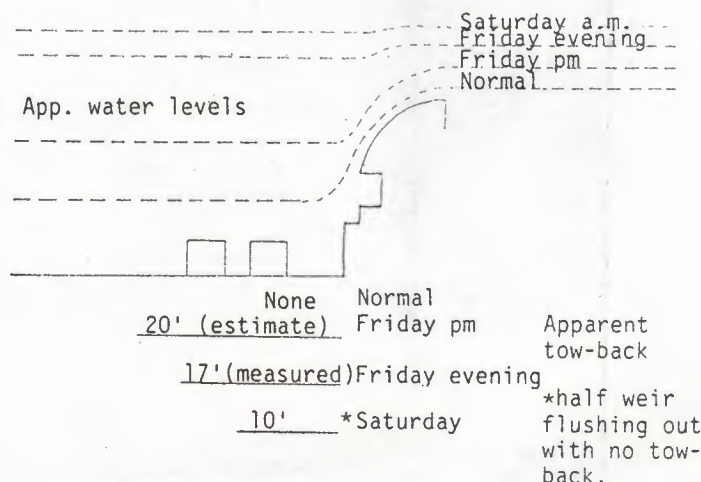
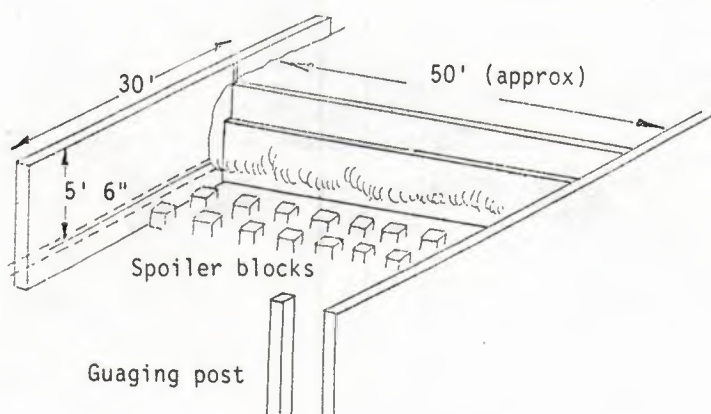
The pathologist's report refers to some skin abrasion over the forehead. The state of the lungs was typical of drowning. Whilst there was no evidence of cranial injury, the blow to the head could have contributed to the inhalation of water.

Evidence concerning the wearing of a helmet by Michael Watkinson was confused, but it would appear that he did wear a helmet, which he probably took off at a point when he crossed from one side of the river to the other, before attempting to reach the boy struggling in the stopper.

Both P.C. Habermehl and Michael Watkinson clearly understood the risks they were taking, and both entered the water in disregard of their own safety, in an effort to save another person from drowning.

Michael Watkinson was held in high regard as a teacher and as a basic instructor. He was known to be cautious and caring. It is not clear as to just why his instruction to the group, to wait for him, was not obeyed. It does bring home to us, however, the vital importance of always keeping the group under total control, and especially when an incident such as a capsize occurs. The previous fatality involving a qualified instructor, occurred at sea in 1973. This started to go wrong at the very same point. There was no obvious danger at the moment when a capsize occurred, and the group was not brought sufficiently under control immediately.

Had Michael Watkinson been carrying a throw line, he would most probably not have had to enter the water - or could have been tied on had he done so. It was not his intention to be involved in the danger area at the weir. As always, however, the motto must be to be prepared for every eventuality.



KAYAK HANDLING SKILLS TESTS

1 STAR



AIM: The test is designed as a basic assessment of ability at the end of a beginner's course. It is an 'encouragement' test.

METHOD: The test may be taken in any sequence.

EXAMINER: BCU Instructor (Minimum).

THEORY: Each candidate to answer one question under each heading.

1. Capsize drill
2. Kayak, paddle and spraydeck
3. Personal dress and buoyancy

PRACTICAL 'A': Perform the following skills:

1. Launch the kayak and get into it
2. Forward paddling over a circuit of at least 100m including controlled turns
3. Paddling backwards
4. Stopping in both directions
5. Forward sweeping only to turn in large circle
6. Forward and reverse strokes to turn 360° in both directions
7. Return to the edge and disembark
8. Capsize and swim ashore

PRACTICAL 'B': Demonstrate satisfactory beginnings in:

1. Support stroke
2. Draw stroke
3. Stern rudder



2 STAR



AIM: A test to be taken on a follow-up course at a standard above the beginner.

METHOD: The test may be taken in any sequence.

EXAMINER: BCU Instructor - Kayak (minimum).

THEORY: Each candidate must answer two questions under each heading.

1. Current - tidal or river
2. Group control and signals
3. The effect of weather
4. The importance of personal ability

PRACTICAL 'A': Each candidate must satisfactorily perform each of the skills:

1. Support Strokes - stationary and on the move
2. Draw Strokes
3. Low Brace Turn
4. Capsize and Rescue
5. Good basic forward and backward paddling
6. Stern rudder

PRACTICAL 'B': Demonstrate satisfactory beginnings in:

1. Sculling
2. Eskimo Rescue

3 STAR



AIM: When the candidate can pass this test he or she can consider themselves a canoeist rather than a beginner.

METHOD: The test may be taken in any sequence.

EXAMINER: BCU Senior Instructor - Kayak (Minimum).

THEORY: Each candidate must answer two questions under each heading.

1. Types of canoe
2. Types of paddle
3. Use of towline
4. Personal equipment for a day on the water

PRACTICAL 'A': Each candidate must satisfactorily perform each of the skills:

1. Sculling Draw
2. Sculling Support
3. Recovery Strokes
4. Draw Stroke
5. Bow Rudder
6. Eskimo Rescue
7. Tilting the canoe to assist turning

PRACTICAL 'B': Demonstrate satisfactory beginnings in:

1. One man rescue
2. Eskimo roll



Organised by the British Canoe Union in conjunction with the British Schools Canoeing Association.

For details of the above tests and proficiency tests, touring tests, coaching awards, and any other information relating to canoeing, contact:

British Canoe Union, Flexel House, 45/47 High Street, Addlestone, Surrey KT15 1JV.

Telephone: Weybridge 41341



NEW LOG BOOK

A LOOSE LEAF VERSION AT LAST

The Coaching Log Book has now been revised, and is available in loose leaf form. Continuation sheets may be purchased which can be inserted in the right places.

This innovation follows numerous requests from coaching scheme members. No longer need examiners jump from book to book, or have to find the information they need from school exercise books and similar, which are often not laid out in an easy-to-follow manner by the candidate.

Although the initial book now costs 20p more, the continuation sheets are 25p less each time.

PRICES are: Log Book now £1.20. Continuation sheets 75p. Please state clearly Loose Leaf version when ordering, if such is required.

Existing and new saddle-stitched log books can be converted to loose-leaf by removing the staples, trimming the spine, and drilling through. The continuation sheets can be used with existing log books, but the sections do not follow on precisely. The new version has been revised so that the continuation sheets do not interrupt the sections.

NEW STAR TEST POSTER

The new Star Test Poster is featured on the opposite page. Sized 16.5" x 23.5" in black on blue paper, the poster is available free on receipt of a 13p stamp at BCU office, or SCA Office if you live "north of the border".

Third Party Insurance

Third Party Indemnity for members of the Coaching Scheme, provided through payment of your membership fee, has been negotiated on the understanding that you are a voluntary instructor operating within the voluntary sector. This may include the receiving of out-of-pocket expenses.

If you receive a fee from a commercial or statutory body, such as a centre or school, it is the responsibility of your employer to possess public liability insurance on your behalf. Should you sell your services as a freelance instructor, even if you only undertake a few sessions per week, you should negotiate separate public liability indemnity with the insurers.

This is likely to cost in the region of £20 per annum, and a levy should be included in the charge you make to employers, to cover this commitment.

It is still necessary for your 'employer' to be covered, however. It is possible that an apportionment of blame could be made following a successful action for negligence on your part which resulted in the death or injury of a student. It could, for example, be determined that whilst you had made an error of judgement, your employer had neglected to pass on some vital information, and this fact had contributed to the problem. The business or private school would then have to find the money to meet its share of the cost of the damages awarded, from its own resources. You would be covered for your part of the award, through your policy, negotiated as recommended above.

If you sell your services therefore, in any way other than through the receiving of reasonable out of pocket expenses, you should contact our insurers - 0205 65505 (Weller and Co), or another company, in order to ensure that your particular liability is being met.

The BCU/CANI/SCA/WCA membership fee includes third party insurance against claims, under the following terms:

"The limit of cover provided in any one claim is £500,000. The insurance policy indemnifies the British Canoe Union and/or its officials, and/or members and/or affiliated clubs (insofar as concerns canoeing and social activities) against claims for legal liability (personal injury and property damage - but not property held in the custody or control of the insured) to third parties. Indemnity against third party risks required by many local authorities before canoe surfing is permitted, is covered by this policy. All canoeing and related activities are included and there is member to member liability. The policy also covers members of the Coaching Scheme for legal liability arising out of or caused by wrongful advice."

For a claim to be valid, an instructor would have had to be shown to be negligent in some way. Should personal accident insurance be required, which provides a payment to the injured party, where the accident is either his or her own fault, or is a pure accident where no-one else is to blame, then a personal accident insurance policy is required separately. BCU members are covered in this respect, in accordance with the terms set out in the standard leaflet.

Copies of the policy are available, if required, upon receipt of a stamped addressed envelope at the BCU office.

COACHING SCHEME FEES & PRICE LIST

BCU MEMBERSHIP FEES

Basic	£6	(does NOT include competition or coaching)
Cadet	£4	
Introductory	£9	(includes competition but NOT coaching)
Youth	£9	
Full	£15.50	
Family	£ 8.50	CANI/SCA/WCA fees will be notified by your Association.

ADDRESSES

BCU, Flexel House, 45/47 High Street,
Addlestone, Weybridge, Surrey, KT15 1JY.
CANI, House of Sport, 2a Upper Malone Road,
Belfast, N. Ireland, BT9 5LA.
SCA, 18 Ainslie Place, Edinburgh.
WCA, 3 Gillian Road, Llandaff, Cardiff, Gwent.

STAR TESTS

Instructor - 1+2 Star; SI - 1,2,3 Star.

PRICE FOR CERTIFICATE AND BADGE £1.50 (NEW PRICE FROM JANUARY 1985)

Certificates and badges can be purchased by Scheme members and by recognised Centres and Authorities at £12.00 per lot of 10 certificates and badges. Please state whether 1, 2 or 3 star. Lots may be mixed. £57.50 per lot of 50. Alternatively, books of 16 entry forms are issued free to Scheme members, from which the candidate can be given a form, on which he or she applies to BCU or National Association Head Office for certificate and badge. There is NO FEE payable for a FAIL.

PLACID WATER TESTS

PRICE FOR CERTIFICATE AND BADGE £1.50 whether BCU member or not. (NEW PRICE FROM JANUARY 1985)

PW Teacher - grades 1 and 2; PW SI - grades 3 and 4

Certificates and badges can be purchased by Scheme members and recognised Centres and Authorities at £12.00 per lot of 10 certificates and badges. Please state carefully grade or distance, and whether kayak or canoe. Lots may be mixed. £57.50 per lot of 50. Alternatively, books of 16 entry forms are issued free to Scheme members, from which the candidate can be given a form, on which he or she applies to BCU (in all cases) for certificate and badge. There is NO FEE payable for a FAIL.

OTHER TESTS

	#Members	Non-Members	
Proficiency	£2.00	£5.00 *	There is NO FEE for a FAIL * Non-Member fee includes Cadet membership for 16 year olds and under.
Life Saving	£2.00	£5.00 *	
Advanced Proficiency	£3.00	£5.00	

AWARDS (White water and Sea)

SI Training (first course only)	£3.50
Instructor	£2.50
Senior Instructor	£3.50

AWARDS (Competition - first course only)

Competition Trainer	£3.50
Competition Coach	£3.50

AWARDS (Placid Water)

Teacher	£2.50	(Half price if candidate is already a member of the Coaching Scheme)
Senior Instructor	£3.50	

CANOE SAFETY TEST

Books of 10 test entry forms are issued free to Grade I (Proficiency) Examiners (E1) on application to BCU HQ or National Associations. Certificate and Badge £1.75 available to successful candidates only, on application to M. Windsor, 65 Harwood Lane, Rossett, Clwyd, LL12 0EU. Cheques payable to COCLG.

BOOKS	Members	Non-Members	
Log Book	£1.20	£1.50	Continuation sheets - 75p.
Canoeing Handbook	£6.00	£9.95 + £1 p&p	
	+ £1 p&p		(state whether bound or loose leaf - binder £2.00)

BADGES

	Members	Non-Members
- Proficiency cloth Badge (available at discount to Examiners)	80p	£1.00
BCU Lifesaving Test Cloth badge	80p	£1.00
Metal Lapel Badge - Proficiency, Bronze, Advanced, Silver	80p	£1.00
Sew-on Badge (Instructor/Senior Instructor/PW Teacher (logo, white on blue)	£1.00p	
Competition Coaches (only)	£1.00	

- The Proficiency Cloth Badge is offered to qualified Examiners at £6.00 per 10

COACHING SCHEME TIES (Award holders only - green) £3.00

COACHING SCHEME JUMPERS (Award holders only - green with 'BCU Coaching' in gold letters on left breast Please state size: Medium, Large, X Large) £8.50

COACHING SCHEME ANORAKS Discontinued until further notice

All prices include VAT and postage & packing. (Except where stated). Please address all orders to the Coaching Office and allow 14 days delivery. Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to the British Canoe Union, and crossed.

RECOMMENDED SCALE OF MINIMUM FEES

Fees should normally be paid in accordance with the established scales of the employing authority concerned. In other cases where fees are appropriate, the following are the recommended minimums:

(a) Coach	£20 per day for the first two days - £15 per day thereafter
(b) Senior Instructor	£15 and £10 as above
(c) Instructor	£10 and £6 as above
(d) ALL	£6 minimum for lectures, with or without slides

* Includes Cadet Membership for 16 year olds and under - please show age on form.

= NB SCOUT ASSOCIATION Warranted Leaders and SEA CADET CORPS Officers are treated as members for Proficiency Tests and BCU Supplies only (not Coaching Awards). This does NOT apply to ordinary Scouts or Sea Cadets.