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THE AIM OF THE BCU COACHING SCHEME IS:

To promote the sport and recreation of canoeing and to ensure that newcomers are introduced to canoeing in a safe and enjoyable way and that they and those already in the sport are assisted to progress to whatever level and in whichever discipline within canoeing suits them best.

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Down with Busby

Do you remember Busby ? Most people got to hate the British Telecom advertisements featuring that d..... bird. A popular cartoon was of 'Busby' tied to a telegraph post, with his beak gagged. In so far as the BCU is concerned, the telephone is a form of queue jumping. It is disruptive and uneconomic, because it interrupts the work pattern. It takes time for a secretary to write down a name and address. There is then delay while 'the threads' of the job in hand are taken up again - only to be disrupted by yet another phone call for a simple item which could have been the subject of a written request, with a stamped, addressed envelope.

When a request is received in writing, with an addressed envelope, it can be quickly, and efficiently dealt with. Why should those who have taken that trouble, whose request has been received, is in a queue waiting to be dealt with, and because all the information is to hand can in theory be actioned quickly and efficiently, be subject to delay because others are phoning in ?

This is the common situation in the BCU office.

If we had 'departments', or 'pools' of secretaries, and were geared up to deal with telephone enquirers, there would be no problem. We are not in that fortunate position. There is one person only per job - and each job as it stands, demands more time than is available. Every routine phone call, which could more easily have been the subject of a written request, is therefore a delaying interruption. This makes the job even more untenable than it already is. It increases the backlog, and delays even further the answering of written queries.

May we seek your co-operation, therefore, in telephoning only on those rare occasions when a simple written request cannot suffice.

If members do co-operate in this way we can promise that those written requests will be met promptly. Further, the many other important projects which get delayed because of the intrusive, time consuming nature of the d..... phone - such as those outlined on page 8 in this issue of CoDe - will be finally progressed !

COACHING COACHES

by WILLIAM T ENDICOTT

Part V of the paper presented by Bill Endicott to the international slalom coaching symposium held at Augsburg in 1988 was featured in CoDe No 32, February 1990

VI - PHASES OF DEVELOPMENT

Any good coach has to be aware that not all athletes are in the same phase of development and should therefore be dealt with differently. I personally think it is the ultimate challenge of a good coach to be able to coach well any athlete in any stage of development, although this is very difficult to do. Here are some thoughts about some different phases as I see them.

1. The basics.

In this phase we are talking about beginning racers learning how to make the boat go straight, how to do a bow rudder, how to roll and so on. These people need a lot of guidance and structure for without you they would not know what to do. But even more important is for the coach to make their program so much fun that they will always want to come back for more.

2. Fast Moves

Once a paddler learns the basic manoeuvres I believe the next thing he should learn is to do race sequences at speed. In this way he learns the proper techniques at the appropriate speed. In this phase, the coach's job consists of selecting the courses so they stress the major moves a racer needs to do well, as well as timing him, discussing ways of doing the move, and extracting principles from the sequences and making sure the boater understands them.

3. Running clean at speed

Once a boater can do little sequences fast, the next problem is for him to do them consistently clean. Here the coach has to talk about leaving safety margins - not cutting the gates quite so close. One good way of doing this is to repeat the same courses many times, maybe 15 or 20, instead of 5 or 10. Another objective for the coach is to make sure that the boater learns all the little 'escapes' - my name for the small corrective strokes that allow a boater to nip a mistake in the bud and blend corrective strokes in as part of forward strokes.

4. Getting into good endurance shape

Up to now the coach and athlete have been working on sequences where the athlete gets a lot of rest after each attempt, as much as he wants. But now the athlete has to add to his workout schedule a lot of measured rest, short rest, or no rest sessions.

At first the coach can time these interval sessions basically for motivational purposes: the athlete has someone there with him.

But gradually the coach should wean the athlete from this and get the athlete to time himself. Thus, in this phase, I think the coach's role subtly shifts from technical analysis to task master and motivator. He has to figure out ways to motivate the athlete to do this relatively hard, boring, repetitive work. Here are some ways to do this:

- * just having the coach at the session is a big motivator, especially if he times and scores the session. The athlete will want to try hard for the coach.
- * always be thinking out new types of workouts and suggest them to the athlete, or new things to do, such as monitoring pulse rate
- * encourage small groups to go out together for interval training. Just having someone else working out on the training course is a motivator even if the two athletes aren't even working on the same part of the course.

5. Getting consistency

By this I mean doing consistently well on long courses, either in practice or in races. Doing full length runs on whitewater gates is the best solution and for this the coach's role is first and foremost one of manager: locating a good training site; getting enough people together to hang a course; making sure the athletes are getting times on the courses (split times and/or full length times); recording the times and the penalties and telling them to the athletes doing the workout, so that they know what the current fastest time and best score are, as targets to shoot for.

Another important role for the coach in this phase is that of psychologist: often psychological problems are the main obstacle to big success in this phase.

These are the main phases, once an athlete has decided to train really hard, 1-2-3 times every day, which usually starts in phase 2, I think it takes about 5 years before he can start getting very high results on a consistent basis. A good coach has to be able to tell which phase of development the athlete is in at any given time in order to address his current needs most effectively. I think the athlete's age doesn't have as much to do with this as the phase he is in. I have had 30-40 year olds in phases 2-4, and 18 year olds in phase 5 and they all seem to behave in ways that are predictable by their phase and development more than their age.

While moving through these phases, I think the coach's style changes from a fairly authoritarian one with beginners to a more democratic one with elite racers. The beginners need a lot of direction but the top athletes usually know a tremendous amount about their training and really just need a manager to make sure everything goes smoothly. With beginners the coach can make up the workout schedule by himself, for example, but with the elite racer, he should do it with their advice.

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CANOEING HANDBOOK
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WHY DO THEY HATE US ?

asks AMOS BEWICK

This is an article about canoeists, waves and other wave users . . . except windsurfers. Names of places and people have been altered for security reasons - apart from mine as I like to see my name in print.

I was introduced to the joys of riding waves as a canoeist and in the days when the Dancer was the prized boat of Reba CC. Later I surfed a plastic ski, then a Pro Gun and finally onto a surf board. Now, depending on the waves, my mood and who else is out, I can go and surf a board, ski or my first love, the Dancer. So that's my surfing background and I think that I'm in a position to comment from a variety of different view points . . . I'm still friendly with others from each surfing fraternity - although disguises have been necessary.

So why do all the boardies in the line-up moan when they see canoes entering the water ? What has given us such a bad reputation ? Well the answer is simple: canoeists ! Once one canoeist does some incredibly stupid and dangerous thing, normally because they can't handle the situation, every canoeist is tarred with the same brush.

Remember, when people with semi naked heads just inches from the water see 13' of out-of-control plastic hurtling towards them, it is quite scary - especially as the occupant has metal tipped paddles, 'crash' helmet, buoyancy aid, body armour, and that 'I'm out of control' expression !

Hopefully it is obvious that the biggest culprit is the paddler who goes out in conditions that cause him/her to get too close to other water users . . . a collision with a boat can seriously damage your health, and has been known to be fatal.

For Example

Lets give some real life examples. I was once on holiday in Glen Thinnel, and saw lots of canoeists descend onto the beach - the dreaded canoe club. Yes, you've met them on the rivers - gallons of paddlers, some good and some intent on swimming everywhere because the experts are there to save them. Well, they were all kitted out with the latest equipment, and into the waves they came. The good ones paddled out and surfed unnoticed on the green waves. Their 'responsibilities', in blissful ignorance, just annoyed the other water users.

The better 'annoying' canoeists would pull loops rather than ride waves - very impressive eh ! The not-so-good 'clubbites' would try and impress their mates by seeing who could miss all the real waves and take the biggest, bounciest bongo slide.

Imagine what all this looks like to other water users. The beginner canoeists were left in the small soup, swimming and boating and didn't really affect any one. Its the group in the middle that did the damage to canoeing reputations - hurtling towards the beach on big frothy lumps of white water, seemingly with their eyes shut. I was looking after some friends' children, and did have some words with one bloke who was blissfully ignorant of the situation, and the danger he was to those children.

Another situation occurred in Ty Rabe Thwy, where someone took a group out via the river. Unfortunately, being on the ocean caused the group so much awe that they all fell out. All the bodies were quickly recovered, but the boats went surfing on a very nice reef break. This did not impress the locals who were trying to surf - though it did introduce them to the noble art of slalom. They were also concerned about the safety aspect.

No thanks for dropping in

The greatest offence to other wave users is the act of 'dropping in'. Everyone is guilty of this, intentionally and in ignorance, at some point in their surfing careers. It is up to those of us who know the rules to explain to others not to swear at the villains and thus create bad feeling, or to snigger as someone we know drops in and ruins someone's ride, at best.

It appears to me that the most dangerous canoeists are those who only surf waves with other canoeists - especially if they go in huge groups and normally on rivers (where they're not likely to injure anyone else). Danger lurks when others have the misfortune to be in the sea at such times. I've watched Reba C C out, and the intention seemed to be to bongo your opponent into the beach. But it didn't injure other water users (because they had fled as they saw the canoeists coming out . . . joke !) and they had a great time . . . body armour was essential !

I don't know if you've noticed, but it always appears that the people who give canoeists a bad name are always strangers on the local bit of water. This applies to all surfers on a new break. People tend to be very wary of strangers, and an infringement of local surf etiquette is never forgotten - especially if they are a little shy, and don't stop for a chat . . . basic surf etiquette in my book !

Bad surf canoeists would do better to learn the art in uncrowded waters (I know these are rare in the summer). It would certainly be safer for others. Nobody cares if a group of people want to surf kayaks backwards, sideways, out of control, (or whatever) as long as they or their loved ones, or those who are deemed to be part of their gang (boardy, boogie boarder) are not in danger or the fun being ruined.

Canoeists aren't all bad !

More real-life situations in favour of canoeists must be found. On a visit to South Wales a large group from a well advertised centre descended onto their local beach. They found their own bit of beach, avoided other surfers, and seemed to have a good safe system set up . . . drop-ins kept to a minimum. I even saw someone instruct them on the beach about safety and drop-ins and other surfers.

The next examples are a little anti: 'On I used to surf a canoe, but now I've grown up'. Whilst at home (on a reef break) out on my ski socializing with board and ski friends, a canoe was seen paddling out of the harbour. The canoeist was known to me but not to any of the others. He waited on the outside had proceeded to catch waves far out, rode them beautifully and certainly knew not to drop in, and avoid nasty wipeout near others. Years ago we used to surf kayaks together. But I still heard ex-canoeists complain - basically he was too good for them.

Another example was at a ski contest. Boardies at one end of the beach, and skis at the other. A lone canoeist went out in the middle. None of the ski paddlers said anything except an ex-canoeist who has 'ascended' to a ski . . . he bemoaned that a canoeist should even think of going out. Unfortunately the canoeist couldn't handle the waves and swam, but he was at a distance from either crowd. I wasn't very popular by saying in a loud voice 'you did that all the time' to my ex-canoeist friend who had attained a higher form of enlightenment.

To conclude

- 1 The canoes are harmful in collisions, as are other craft - but they are less manoeuvrable and heavier.
- 2 Manoeuvrability does limit their use in crowded waters, especially where the waves are closing out. Once a canoe is broached, they stay travelling in the wave much further than other craft.
- 3 Many canoeists seem unknowledgeable about the rules of the surf. Their ease at paddling out means that they can infringe this rule quite often.
- 4 One canoeist with anti-social behaviour is a lot more noticeable than 10 or so boardies, solely due to the fact that someone has to be very skilled at riding a board to carve a 13' swathe all the way to the beach . . . they normally fall off, whereas any idiot can do it in a canoe.
- 5 Large hordes of canoeists do cause problems. The experts should not neglect to impart the rules of the waves to the people they're responsible for. This doesn't just refer to Senior Instructors, but all those who by experience have caused others to follow their example.
- 6 Bongo slides. 8 out of 10 boardies who expressed an opinion said they were terrified of boats going sideways. It's generally acknowledged that the art of surfing is to ride the green wave - sideways in white water, though fun, isn't surfing.

All this sounds pretty unfavourable towards canoeists. Being honest, all surfers endanger others at times, and spoil others enjoyment by dropping-in, or other anti-social behaviour. Canoeists are just capable of getting into more unpleasant situations due to their ease of paddling out, and the fact that once wiped out or put out of control, they pose such a threat to life and limb.

THE DRAW - A SIMPLE STROKE

by JOHN TOMPKINS

The Draw stroke seems to have built up a whole sub-culture around itself. It is a simple stroke, but if you look at the star test syllabus and the *BCU Canoeing Handbook*, it takes on a complexity of unnecessary and possibly dangerous additions. To quote from the star test syllabus:

“Head turned through 90 degrees, then shoulders, rotating at the waist. Paddle reached well out with your forearm (it does not state which forearm) at 90 degrees to the paddle shaft. Blade deep so that the effect is below the canoe, and kept in the water for the recovery. Sideways displacement for a minimum of five metres.”

Hands up all you paddlers who having qualified at 3-star and above (and this includes TI, I, TSI, SI and Coaches) who actually use this method other than in the teaching or demonstrating environment.

In practice the draw stroke is rarely used more than two or three times in succession and most paddlers (including Richard Fox, see the video ‘Basic Strokes’) will simply reach out to the side, plant their paddles and pull, with body rotation slight (if any) and an ‘out of the water’ recovery. Bill Mason in his *Path of the Paddle* (White Water) does not use the underwater recovery. In fact he rarely seems to use the draw stroke, preferring instead the sculling draw.

Performing the Draw stroke by itself without the torso rotation and underwater recovery is not sloppy paddling, it is the practical and correct use of the stroke.

I am sure many of you will have found that a beginner will often pick up the draw stroke quite quickly, but as soon as you introduce the underwater recovery they start to have problems.

So let us look at where a draw stroke may be put to practical use:

- 1 When moving away from the bank, if you are in still or slow moving water. This is the only time when an underwater recovery might be useable, but in practice most people only use one draw stroke at this point and then go into a power or sweep stroke according to their intended direction.
- 2 When paddling forward on still or slow moving water. If you are moving forward and require some sideslip to avoid an obstacle, a couple of draw strokes might seem to be in order. So whilst still travelling forward you apply a draw stroke. On reaching the canoe with the paddle, you turn the paddle through 90 degrees for your underwater recovery. What happens next? All that forward momentum which you have built up, suddenly has a paddle turned at right angles to it. If you have a strong grip and are lucky you may hold onto your paddle and stay upright. But your canoe will certainly swing towards the paddle side as your nice neat underwater recovery becomes an instant brake on that side, losing all your hard earned speed.
- 3 When paddling on fast moving water. If you are paddling down a rapid and a rock presents itself for you to avoid, then a draw stroke could be a good way to side slip past it. Consider though: if you then need a second draw stroke, and you try to link them with an underwater recovery, what happens when you turn your paddle at right angles to the main flow? The fast water grabs your paddle and turns your boat away from the paddle side. In fact it will turn you towards the very rock which you were trying to avoid.
- 4 When approaching a rapid. On the approach to a rapid if you wish to get off the water to either inspect or portage, many people prefer to move sideways rather than turn broadside to the main stream. In these conditions most experienced paddlers will prefer to use the sculling draw, which is a safer and more secure stroke, without the dangers associated with 2 and 3 above.

Given that these examples are true, then why does the BCU insist that we teach beginners to use what is an impractical and potentially dangerous addition to an otherwise safe and useful stroke?

This is not an attack on the BCU, because as part of the Coaching Scheme, it should be our job to analyse everything that we teach, and when necessary to criticize and attempt to change things that we do

not agree with. If we blindly teach whatever is in the syllabus without question, then our sport will not develop, and the art of paddling will become bogged down by restrictions which seemed like a good idea at the time.

Editorial note. The emphasis on keeping the blade in the water for the recovery is, in fact, inherited from the very early days of the Coaching Scheme. Certainly, when Richard Fox was performing the stroke for us in a preliminary session to the making of the basic skills film, it became apparent that the under-water recovery was not natural to him.

I am not convinced that under-water recovery is never used in reality, and would want to study a number of paddlers in action with a view to looking for this particular feature, before suggesting that it is not taught at all. You will see from the description which follows from the new edition of the *Canoeing Handbook*, that the emphases of which John Tompkins complains, have largely been changed.

The description quoted in John’s article is from the *Canoe 3-Star* test. Here, the sequence of body presentation - and turning the head first to achieve better shoulder rotation - was taken on board from George Steed of the American Canoe Association, in about 1980.

I do not believe that an effective draw stroke can be applied without correct body presentation. This will always look more casual when performed by the expert, but does have to be learned.

The American Red Cross manual *Canoeing* mentions the importance of body rotation and gives advice regarding the under-water recovery for the Draw Stroke.

Whilst it would not be a reason for leaving under-water recovery in as part of the draw stroke, if it is actually found to be irrelevant in reality, what the under-water recovery also does, is to teach the beginner to ‘feel’ the blade through the water. The business of responding to subtle changes of pressure on the blade, and to ensure continuous correct presentation in an ever changing environment, is fundamental to paddling. Exercises which help paddlers to develop this awareness are important, and I would suggest that this recovery associated with the draw stroke, has certainly not caused any harm.

I am intrigued by the concept of there somewhere, somehow, being a ‘BCU’ which decides these matters and then imposes them upon an alien species. A main purpose of CoDe is to permit debate of the very kind which John has engendered. Most of what is now written as the definition of the basic skills, is brought about through paddlers making such contributions. For example, the highlighting of lower body involvement which now seems to be taken for granted, came about through a throw-away comment in a Coach essay, from Dave Horrocks, who mentioned ‘driving the kayak around the paddle with the opposite knee’ when describing the learning of the bow rudder.

‘What is he talking about?’ I asked myself, and went out and tried it. I found I was doing it automatically, and had never identified it. Nor had I ever heard anyone mention the lower body action during any teaching session. Nor could I find any mention of the part it plays in the performance of the strokes in any reference book I researched.

I then gave thought to what was happening ‘down below’ with the whole range of strokes - including the maintaining of directional control in a gp kayak whilst forward paddling - and was quite amazed at what I found. This factor was articulated, various experts consulted, and now these components have become an accepted part of the teaching progression.

There then followed a series of practical get-togethers with a wide cross-section of Coaching Scheme members, and gradually ideas concerning the nature of the basic skills were developed, and formed the descriptions set out in the 1981 *Canoeing Handbook*.

So please keep the comments coming on this and other topics related to the teaching of our sport. As John has rightly intimated, it is only through such exchanges that we develop. No-one has a monopoly on the truth - not even ‘the BCU’!

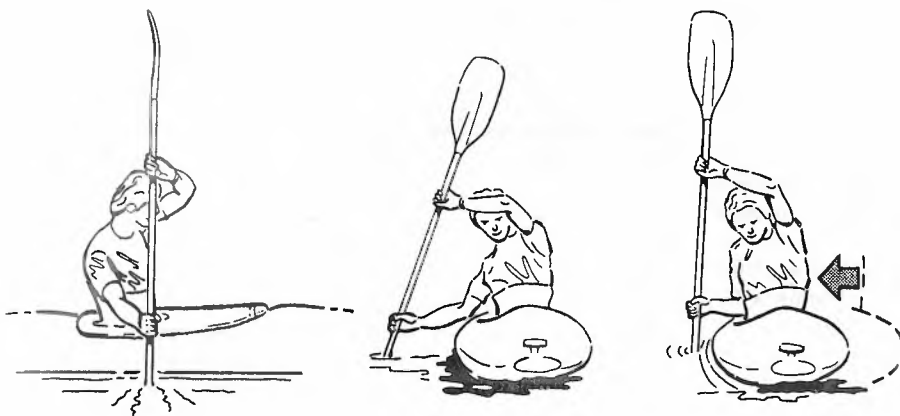


Fig 6:5

The blade is fully immersed, the trunk is slightly rotated, and the top arm 'frames' the face

Draw stroke

The purpose of the draw is to fix the blade in the water and side slip the boat towards it. The position of the paddle shaft is critical and can be illustrated by pulling alongside a vertical post sticking high out of the water. Catch the post with the nearside hand just above the water and reach across the top of your head to grasp the post with the other hand. Once again this position requires flexibility in the trunk and shoulders, as shown in Fig 6:5.

To give the greatest amount of purchase on the water the blade and sometimes part of the shaft are held deep for the whole sideslip. If the paddler wants to cover a lot of ground sideways he must recover the paddle to the starting position each time. This recovery can be made through the air or by slicing back through the water. It is useful to practise both as different water conditions demand different tactics. The slice recovery is made by wrist-rolling the blade through ninety degrees so that its driving face looks rearward; the blade can then easily be knifed away from the hip to restart the stroke. Another method of recovery is to combine these two. At the end of the pull the blade is sliced out of the water rearward without being rotated and then a through-the-air recovery is made. This system is often used to introduce beginners to the draw but is also used at times by proficient slalom and river paddlers in shallow water or when they feel they might need to convert the draw to a stern steering stroke.

The trunk position for a draw stroke is upright with some rotation towards the direction of the sideslip. This rotation gives a greater range of movement to both arms, allowing the paddler to make alterations to the angle of pull on the paddle shaft. This keeps the boat running true in the sideslip and not slewing off course.

The job of the top arm in the draw is to act as a hanger for the paddle on the drawing side of the boat. This arm remains high, (forearm no lower than forehead) throughout the pull and recovery. The reason for this position is that the blade in the water must be kept vertical as much as possible to minimise 'spilling water' off the end of the blade during the pull.

The paddler's vision forwards and sideways must remain unobstructed by the top arm. A quick draw stroke is often used to avoid an obstruction or to make a last minute 'nudge' to line a boat up for a narrow shoot on a rapid. Watch a paddler in difficult water and you will see as many draws as forward strokes.

It is absolutely essential that paddlers learn to draw stroke without hindering vision.

The sideslip

As the boat moves sideways any water which is scooped onto the deck will slow it down and unbalance the paddler. To avoid this the paddler must apply lift to the edge of the boat which is leading the sideslip. The amount of lift required is minimal and determined by the speed of the boat, its volume and shape. It is done by lifting the knee or thigh but remember that it is only enough to allow water to pass under the hull. To an observer the boat will appear to remain level as in Fig 6:6.

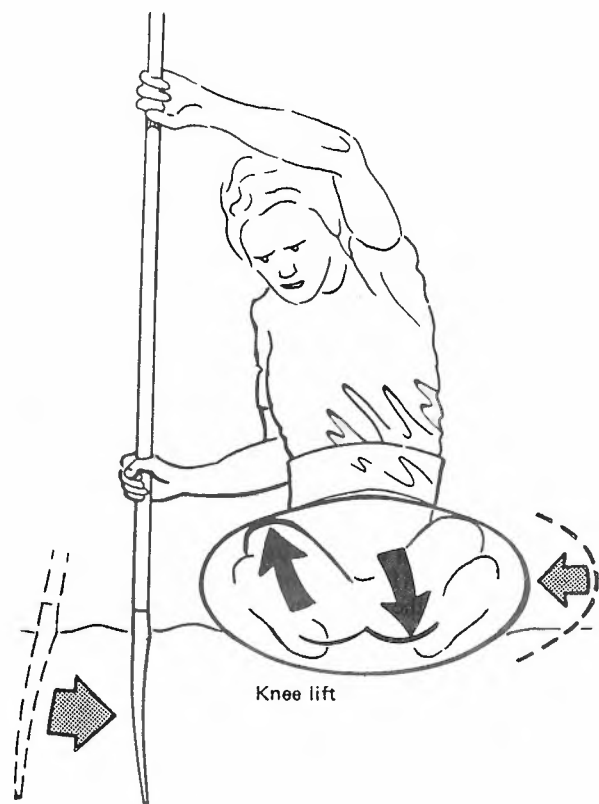


Fig 6:6

During the side-slip use knee-lift to ensure that all the water slips under the hull

SWIMMING . . . *healthy humility*

SAYS DAVID YAFFEY

From the beginners in canoeing to the top levels of competition there is a terrible stigma attached to swimming from your boat. It is generally seen as a failure, often felt to be embarrassing and sometimes laughed at or even scorned. But, on the face of it, there is nothing wrong with swimming.

Technically, getting out of a canoe once it is upside-down, is a life-saving skill. The capsize drill is the first taught of all canoeing skills and it could be argued that it is the most important, or at least the one which must be performed well enough even if all others are not. In this respect it is a fundamental skill and its use should not attract any negative connotations.

There is no doubt however that such stigmas do exist. Spray-deck handles are all too often referred to as the 'panic-strap'. There will always be the snide remarks as a swimmer and his boat circle in an eddy, or are dragged ashore. Club log-books carry league tables for the number of swims each member takes, sometimes prizes are given for the best swimmer and so on. But the most telling evidence, and evidence that shows that the 'its not good to swim' myth even precedes the sport itself, comes from the absolute beginners. I have often been asked by novices, first time at a pool session, 'Will you teach me to roll?' or, 'How long will it be before I can roll?' These novices want to run before they can walk. But fortunately it is an easy and worthwhile job to sort out a few of their misconceptions:

- 1 They don't need to know how to roll yet, rolling skills will take their place in the learning progression.
- 2 They will benefit far more by paying attention to the basic paddling and steering skills than if they become obsessed by the desire to roll.
- 3 A good grasp of the basics allows for a lot of excitement and fun on white-water, grade III rivers can be enjoyed without knowing how to roll.
- 4 In the pool or on a river, if they go over, just get out. Canoeing is a wet sport.

Changing attitudes

Attitudes to swimming from your boat change with experience but not necessarily with increased competence levels. Beginner canoeists have to swim, and there is an acceptance of the event which is concomitant with their place in the sport. This acceptance, diminishes with increasing skill level and a swim becomes an inglorious experience for the up and coming or intermediate paddler. It needn't be so. When you have to exit the boat, then you exit your boat quickly and that's that.

Advanced paddlers, those with considerable experience of white-water, and rolling in white water, shouldn't have to swim, but swimming needn't be a humiliating disgrace. (That 'good' canoeists shouldn't swim is perhaps another fallacy, worthy itself of debate).

Beginners in canoeing can't roll and if they capsize they will probably have to get out. We have all been through this. No expert was born an expert and a certain degree of empathy is needed when dealing with 'a capsized beginner'.

As the skill level of the beginner improves (eg effective support strokes being made) then fewer swims will result from mistakes. This is perhaps the stage in the competence progression when the 'swim-stigma' really sets in. As the necessary recovery techniques are learnt and practised, the beginner capsizes less frequently; now the staying dry approach to canoeing predominates.

On familiar water, the now improver feels he shouldn't capsize and will often paddle so as not to. In a group of this certain ability, competence levels may be judged by those in the group by the number of capsizes and swims. The friendly competition and rivalry of members will exhibit itself as jokes and gibes about particular swims, and there can't be a canoeist anywhere who doesn't remember a river by, amongst other things, the swims he took on it.

If you don't get wet you're not really trying

When I was learning to canoe my instructor told me, 'If you don't get wet, you're not trying'. This is an attitude which would lead to faster gained confidence, competence and humility.

The intermediate canoeist perhaps has the poorest attitude of all towards swimming. With the skills to stay dry and yet still enjoy exciting water, the intermediate paddler thinks that he must be 'getting good' because he doesn't swim anymore. The longer he stays dry the more entrenched this false reasoning becomes. Familiarity breeds contempt is true here and what is needed is a change. Going up a grade or two takes the intermediate down a peg or two and the humbling of a swim can be a good thing. No one person is ever greater than the sport itself, or any particular river for that matter. An unexpected swim can reinforce the respect that all canoeists should have for the forces of nature.

When a canoeist has a good command of all the canoeing skills and is experienced in their use on big water, then swims are, it must be agreed, less likely. But they will happen sooner or later, and to everyone. The matching of skills with worthy challenges is only a matter of degree; the expert shouldn't swim on middle-grade water that he knows well, but on the higher grade white water where the challenge is well suited to the expert's skills, then no such prescription can be made.

There are no losers

White water canoeing is a natural-challenge activity, but although 'Challenging', there are no losers, only winners. To successfully negotiate a course down a river doesn't mean to do so and stay dry, to capsize is not to fail. The activity has its own rewards, for the most part intrinsic and there need be no feelings of shame or failure attached to capsizing or swimming.

Those most experienced in the sport should, when they take a swim, be humbled less than the intermediate canoeist. For all the experience that makes them a 'good canoeist' should also provide them with an attitude to the sport which is based already in humility. A swim for the expert, although on the face of it may appear most humbling, should be completely accepted. The experience should not be rejected but assimilated. This would not only make a good canoeist a better canoeist, but might help others to develop a healthier attitude to swimming from your canoe.

CHURCHILL AWARD FOR STUART BELL

Amongst this years Winston Churchill Travelling Fellowship Award winners is Stuart Bell, an employee of Strathclyde Regional Council, who works as an outdoor pursuits instructor at Faskally Outdoor Centre near Pitlochry.

The award will enable Stuart to undertake research in the USA and Canada into a subject very near to his heart, and his work - Open Canoeing. He intends to establish a National Slide Library of Open Canoeing, as a resource available to other instructors, paddlers, historians, canoe builders, designers and manufacturers.

As well as visiting key museum collections such as the International Museum of Canoes, Kayaks and Rowing Craft in Dorset, Ontario, and the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, he will be visiting important canoe builders (as opposed to manufacturers) such as Henri Vallancourt and Ted Moores.

He will also be officially representing the Scottish Canoe Association at the 1990 International Whitewater Safety Symposium at Nantahala in North Carolina. It is especially relevant this year to Open Canoeists as canoeing is enjoying a renaissance in North America, as well as boom in popularity here in the UK at the moment.

Anyone out there who might be able to provide Stuart with any additional information or contacts in Ontario, Maine, Washington Newport Virginia or North Carolina can contact him on 0796 3557.

Dear CoDe

Dear CoDe

Perhaps the BCU Touring Committee regard the Access situation as 'trivial matters' - to quote Colin Kempson's letter in February CoDe, which might well be one of the reasons for some of the many Access problems in England. It would appear that yet again the BCU is operating as the ECU. How about a meeting of the touring committee being held in Stirling, and see how many of the BCU can find it on the map, never mind getting there.

And yes, I personally would be delighted if Colin never mentioned Scotland again, and particularly in the ECU Development plan.

It would also be a good idea if he were to read Donald's letter again and take some productive advice from it - such as when crossing borders whether in print or otherwise, it would be a good move to check with the natives to make sure you are not about to cause even more access problems.

MARY CONACHER, SCA Access Officer

Dear CoDe,

Many thanks for CoDe 32 February, I especially enjoyed your 'come on Sir, get stuck in.....' story.

Could I pass a few comments on the article on Goal Setting? I dispute the statement 'to be an international kayak racer requires more commitment than to be a recreational paddler'. One wonders what is meant by a recreational paddler. Is it a non-international competitor, a non-competitor, anyone not in full-time training? Let me guess that the most likely one is a non-competitor.

Okay, let's look at the commitment of non-competitive paddlers. I would suggest that people like Alan Fox setting off into the massive Zambezi gorge on a self-contained expedition are displaying a 'level of commitment' well into the international racer league. Try telling Franco Ferrero and Kevin Danforth that their 90 nautical mile crossing of the North Sea in a double kayak last summer was low level commitment because it was non-competitive. And while you are there, try telling me that Maggie Taylor, a disabled paddler whom I had the great pleasure of meeting at Crystal Palace this year, has less commitment to her sport than any other paddler around.

I would also contest the advice about not dreaming or 'idealising'..Here's another statement which assumes competition to be the only aspect of canoesport in which goals are actually set and achieved. I think you are wrong. For many of us, dreaming plays a very important part in forming our plans, and our objectives. It is idealising which spurs us on to formulate the shorter term goals which you correctly mention, and which do, in fact, make the big dreams into reality.

Many of the worlds great adventurers were compulsive dreamers and one could argue that had there been dreaming in the Olympics Sir Francis Chichester, Chris Bonnington and Mike Jones would have all been Gold Medalists. Outside of sport, Martin Luther King and Don Quixote pulled off some pretty impressive achievements on the basis of dreams.

LEADER'S ENDORSEMENT for Canoeing with People with Disabilities

For a number of years a small group of canoeists involved in the field of canoeing with people with disabilities has been meeting to devise and pilot the 'endorsement' scheme. A number of 2-day courses are now staged for instructors and helpers aimed at increasing the awareness of the needs of people with a wide range of disabilities, and increasing the confidence of coaching scheme members by passing on the accumulated wisdom of those experienced in working in this field.

Purpose of the courses

to give participants an awareness of the needs of disabled persons and the relationships between disabilities and canoeing. To give them knowledge and skills to enable them to widen the scope of their existing leader qualification(s) so that they may feel capable of introducing disabled persons to canoeing.

Pre-requisites - either:

- 1 hold a coaching award to the standard of either, Placid Water Teacher, Trainee Instructor, Instructor, Senior Instructor or Coach of the BCU
- or 2 at the discretion of the Course Organiser, persons over 16 years of age without the pre-requisite qualifications, who wish to become "helpers" may also attend the course.

Recommendations

participants should hold the CoCLG Canoe Safety Test or RLSS Life Saving Skill 3 or equivalent award. It is also recommended that participants hold a recognised certificate in Basic First Aid. (British Red Cross, St John's Ambulance or equivalent). A *Guide to Canoeing with Disabled Persons* is the main text for this course and participants are advised to purchase this guide from the BCU or the Course Organiser.

Qualification

there is no formal assessment. Leaders, on successful completion of the course, and who pay a registration fee (£1.50) will be given an Endorsement to the leader qualification held. Helpers who are BCU members and pay the registration fee (£1.50) will be given a Certificate of Attendance. Non BCU members are not registered, but can be given a letter of attendance.

Courses

a number of courses are run throughout the country. Persons recognised by the Union to run these courses are identified by the letters DEE (E2 equivalent) in their qualifications. Persons who have attended such courses are identified by DE in their qualifications, and persons who have not been on an Endorsement Course but have expressed an interest and/or have experience in working with persons with a disability have Din their qualifications.

Opportunities this year

Courses programmed for this year are shown on p68 of the *BCU Members' Year Book*. Courses can be run on request where sufficient candidates can be recruited locally. For details contact Director of Coaching.

PRICES FOR TESTS, AWARDS, BADGES, ARE NOW
CONTAINED ON p75 AND 76 OF THE MEMBERS' YEAR
BOOK CIRCULATED WITH FEBRUARY FOCUS

£2 STAR TESTS ARE £2 STAR TESTS ARE £2 STAR TESTS ARE £2

PROGRESS REPORT RIVER NOISES

DIRECTORY AND RESOURCE MATERIAL UPDATE

The Coaching Scheme Directory

It was planned and hoped to circulate to all Coaching Scheme members, the new Directory, with this issue of *Focus*.

The Directory will contain the syllabus for all the tests and awards which the Scheme operates, completely up to date, together with other information such as the Rules, the Examiner Grading system, and so forth.

All is in fact, ready, but the size of booklet required to accommodate all the relevant information turned out to be more than the original estimate. Consequently it became necessary to seek advertising and other revenue to off-set the additional cost, and this simply could not be achieved in the time left to meet the publication deadline.

However, a completely up to date leaflet for any syllabus can now be provided on receipt of a stamped addressed envelope - NO PHONE CALLS PLEASE! You will receive your comprehensive, all-singing, all-dancing, up to date Directory with the next Focus, in June.

New resource packages

Also in the final stages of preparation are sets of resource material for the running of coaching awards courses, from Supervisor through to Senior Instructor Training. RCOs will each hold a complete set, for free loan by course organisers, and spare sets will be held at the BCU office for emergencies. It is anticipated that demand for the use of this material can be met from 1 May.

It will also be possible for a course organiser to purchase a complete set of transparencies and the video. Alternatively he or she can be supplied with a free set of originals to copy onto his or her own OHP transparencies. The video tape - containing supporting films - may be copied locally.

RCOs, LCOs and awards course organisers listed in the Members' Year Book will be sent full information once the project is completed. They will also be furnished with a copy of the new, updated *Notes for the Guidance of Examiners for BCU Coaching Awards Courses*, when this is re-published in late April.

This will be also be available free to all Examiners upon receipt of an A5 or larger, self addressed envelope, at the BCU office. Again, **stamped, addressed envelope please - NO PHONE CALLS!**

THE 1990 TOURING AND COACHING CONFERENCE

At the risk of invoking further the displeasure of the editor of *Canoeist* magazine, those involved have agreed that there is considerable mileage to be gained from a 'coming together'. This year's National Coaching Conference has therefore been re-designated the National Touring and Coaching Conference.

Part of the logic for this move may be the fact that so many from the two 'disciplines' are in reality one and the same person!

The date of this year's Conference is 13-14 October at Holme Pierrepont. RCOs and LCOs will be sent details when available. Other members are invited to send a sae to the BCU office for details, which will be forwarded as soon as the programme has been finalised.

THE 1990 COACH AWARD COURSES

The Coach Award courses programmed for this year are:

Plas y Brenin	13-20 October
Glenmore Lodge	23-28 October

Please send sae to the BCU Office for full details.

THE 'ADVANCED' PROFICIENCY TEST

Still a requirement for the Coach Award

Some confusion has been caused by the 'clarification' of the the tests and awards system spelled out on pages 51-52 of the *Members' Year Book*.

The chart of the tests shows that the performance level of the Advanced Proficiency falls between the 4 Star (a level IV test) and the 5 Star (a level V test). Its standard is therefore level IV-V.

The requirement for the Coach Award is the Advanced Proficiency Test (level IV-V). The presentation does not indicate a change in the requirement. The Advanced Proficiency is required for the Coach Award, not a 4 or 5 Star Test.

WATERPROOF PAPER

Sheets of A4 size waterproof paper are still available from the BCU office. See p76 of the *BCU Members' Year Book* for details.

CONFERENCE FOR VOLUNTARY COACHES

A one-day Conference is to be held at Manchester Polytechnic on Wednesday 25 April from 0930-1730 for part-time voluntary coaches.

Full details from D Robinson, Liverpool Polytechnic, IM Marsh Campus, Barkhill RD, Liverpool L17 6BD.

ACTIVITIES INSTRUCTOR

Full time post at QEII Silver Jubilee Activities Centre, Upper Hamble Country Park, Bursledon, Southampton, Hampshire.

The Centre provides activities for the handicapped and people with special needs.

Instructor required with BCU qualifications and experience in working with people with special needs and learning difficulties.

CHIEF INSTRUCTOR

(Water Sports)

Up to £13,374 plus subsidised on-site accommodation

Ravens Ait is a unique and attractive island-based water activity/training facility situated on the Thames about 3/4 mile from Kingston's thriving town centre. We seek an enthusiastic, dynamic and committed watersports specialist to join our new and highly motivated watersports team.

Primarily you will supervise our complement of full and part-time instructors in the implementation of a comprehensive programme including Canoeing, Sailing, Windsurfing and Rowing, and you will also oversee the maintenance of the site's equipment. In addition, as a member of the management team, you will play a leading part in ensuring the optimum performance and utilisation of this highly acclaimed centre.

The nature of your role will necessitate flexible working arrangements encompassing evening and weekend working as part of core time, but we offer a generous remuneration package in complete recompense. This will include subsidised service accommodation on the island which you will be required to occupy.

You must be a fully qualified Senior Instructor (BCU E-2) with both a wide knowledge of the canoeing scene, and the ability to teach sailing. Ideally you should also have considerable practical experience and a desire to extend and broaden your watersports qualifications.

To learn more about the post please telephone Peter Slater, Water Activities Development Officer, on 01-390 3554.

Application forms from Staffing Office (SS/HLS), Guildhall 1, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT1 1EU. Tel: 01-547 4602 (answerphone). Please quote Ref: 1602/A4.

Closing date: 27th April 1990.



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