

CoDe

Coaching Development



the magazine of the BCU Coaching Service

THE AIM OF THE BCU COACHING SERVICE 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.

DEMOCRACY RULES, OK ! ?

A previous edition of CoDe announced that Examiner rights would be withdrawn after April 1998 from those current grade 1 and grade 2 Examiners (E1, E2) who did not obtain the Advanced Proficiency Certificate (now known as 5 Star) by 1 April 1998.

It could be said that this gave rise to a certain degree of consternation among a number of members who would be affected. A significant amount of correspondence was received - some of it bordering on querying the parentage of those involved in the decision making process ! Concern was also expressed with regard to the possible detrimental effect of this policy, at the Examiner Forums which took place between November and the end of January.

A number of anomalies and queries also became apparent whilst sorting out the implications of what had been decided. Because of this, allied to the strength of opinion expressed by members on some aspects of those decisions, the National Coaching Committee met again on 10 February 1996, to consider the problems, and to re-consider some of the policies which had been promulgated.

The good news therefore is that existing Examiner rights will not be withdrawn from 1 April 98, nor at any designated time thereafter. It will not be necessary for existing or new Examiners to obtain Advanced Proficiency (now called 5 Star) in order to test Proficiency (now called 4 Star).

The changes which have now been finally agreed, which will be implemented from hereon, and their effect on current award holders, are spelled out in this issue, and the enclosed Directory.

Your new *Coaching Directory* of tests and awards, containing the up to date revised syllabi, together with other information relating to your work as a coach, is provided with this edition of CoDe.

Do please read the information supplied before picking up the phone ! All queries likely to arise should have been addressed. A fine of one year's additional membership fee will be considered for anyone phoning for an answer to a query which is clearly explained in CoDe or the Directory.

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CoDe is the official organ of the BCU Coaching Service. Members are free to express their views within its pages. Articles and comments therefore reflect the thoughts of the author and do not necessarily state the policy of the National Coaching Committee. CoDe is programmed for publication in February, April, June, August, October, December. Final copy date: 1st of previous month. Contributions, including pictures, are welcome. Please send them to: BCU, Adbolton Lane, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 5AS.

**Editors: Director of Coaching,
Coaching Development Officer**

**The coaching
service is
supported by**



The Award Changes

Remember Kiss - Keep it simple, stupid !!!

Please make it simple. Some visitors to the International Canoeing Exhibition complained that they had been unable to follow the explanations in *CoDe* with regard to the proposed changes to the tests and awards system.

This is partly due to the fact that until now the process has been one of consultation, and of course things have changed from issue to issue as feedback has been received from the membership.

What follows, however, is the result of decisions made by the National Coaching Committee on 10 February 1996 which are now final. The main features, and how they affect current members - ie those who obtained their qualification, test or status before 31 December 1995, is as follows:

- 1 The tests syllabi have been revised. All the up to date syllabi are included in the *Coaching Directory* circulated with this issue of *CoDe*. The changes are not earth shattering. The existing tests will continue to be accepted for the foreseeable future on the same terms as those undertaken against the new syllabus for entry to, or the obtaining of higher, coaching qualifications.
- 2 For Supervisors and Placid Water Teachers, for Trainee Instructors and Instructors, there is no immediate change in status or rights - you carry on exactly as before, except that Supervisors, Placid Water Teachers and Trainee Instructors may now test for the relevant 1 Star, and Instructors can become assessors for the Supervisor award and the Canoeing Safety Test (see the relevant section in the enclosed *Directory*).

The only other thing that will change straight away is the name of your qualification, and this will be signified by a change in the coding on your membership card when you next renew. From 1 April 1998 you will be expected to hold at least a 4-hour **Emergency Aid First Aid award**, and there will be a requirement for re-validation every 3 years, by supplying a short log of your activities when renewing your membership in 1999!

A schedule of the new names for the qualifications is included in the *Coaching Directory* which is enclosed with this issue.

- 3 For Senior Instructors, apart from the name change, the only difference is the fact that from 1 April 98 Inland Kayak SIs will not be automatically recognised as qualified for operating on grade 3 water, and above, unless they hold the Advanced Proficiency Test, and similarly for Sea SIs operating in advanced conditions. From 1 April 98 neither award will be automatically recognised for the supervision of Surfing. 1-day conversion courses are, however, available.

Current Examiner rights held by Senior Instructors (now known as level 3 Coaches) will not be withdrawn. Nor will it be necessary for existing or new Senior Instructors to hold the Advanced Proficiency Test (now called the 5 Star Test) before being permitted to assess for Proficiency (now called 4 Star).

- 4 It would appear that an endeavour to keep members informed has led to a belief that the BCU is committed to advocating S/NVQs as the primary awards. This is not the case. The BCU is not dedicated to the promotion of S/NVQs above the BCU awards.

The full range of qualifications will continue to be offered as BCU awards, without reference to S/NVQs. Those requiring an S/NVQ will have an extra training and assessment requirement. Those wanting the BCU award will have only the existing syllabus to follow, which has been enhanced solely in accordance with the natural evolutionary demands of the sport.

The BCU does not set out to favour the commercial sector over the interests of the volunteers. As already stated, an attempt has been made to keep members informed of the progress made with regard to having our qualifications accepted as S/NVQs, and this may have led to a belief that they were being 'thrust down members' throats' in the interests of commercial providers. Currently, however, there is no reason for volunteers to seek an S/NVQ, and no attempt will be made to push S/NVQ courses above the BCU awards. The application of government funding can, however, in some instances, make the S/NVQ cheaper, even for those in the voluntary sector, and this may be worth looking out for!

It must also be stated, however, that the BCU is deeply indebted to voluntary input from commercial providers, as well as the unstinting efforts of its volunteers. It is hoped that the interests of both, and those of the Union and the sport, can be served through a harmonious consolidation of effort.

Full details concerning the changes to the tests and awards syllabi and structure and their effect are spelled out in the *Coaching Directory*.

THE ACTIVITY CENTRES (YOUNG PERSONS' SAFETY) ACT 1995

At the time of going to press, no announcement had been made with regard to the Regulations, and who the Licencing Authority is to be, for the Activity Centres Act. It seems likely, however, that the Regulations will be laid before Parliament in the not too distant future.

Unless there is any change to the arrangements, those who currently offer the prescribed activities to people under the age of 18, on a commercial basis, and intend to continue to do so, will have to register with the Licencing Authority before 1 August 1996.

There will be a public announcement following the Regulations being laid before Parliament, and if this occurs prior to the next issue of *CoDe*, we will spell out the implications for all providers in that edition.

GRAFHAM WATER CENTRE TEMPORARY ACTIVITY INSTRUCTORS £150.00 per week. Accommodation Available

Cambridge County Council requires temporary instructors to deliver adventurous activities to young people and adults at Grafham Water Centre.

Candidates who are qualified and experienced to instruct canoeing, climbing, ab-seiling, archery, orienteering, mountain bike riding, development training, windsurfing, sailing or power boats are welcome to request an application form and further details from:

Mr Philip Robson
Centre Manager
Grafham Water Centre
Perry
Huntingdon
Cambridgeshire
PE18 0BX

Telephone 01480 810521

NOTICES NOTICES NOTICES

STAR TESTS - PLEASE NOTE

Level 1 Coaches (Supervisors / PW Teachers) and Trainee Level 2 Coaches (Trainee Instructors) can now test for the relevant 1 Star. A test entry form is enclosed with this issue. This may be reproduced as necessary, or send for a free booklet(s) of 16 copies of the entry form - please see the 'Hotline Order Form' also enclosed.

Badges and Certificates for 1-3 Star Tests can be purchased in advance in batches of 10, at a discount of 18% - ie £20.50 per lot of 10 (which may be mixed values or disciplines). The BCU does not require notification of Star Test results when badges and certificates are issued 'on the spot'.

EXAMINERS

PLEASE USE YOUR DISCRETION

The theory questions for the revised syllabi for the 1-3 Star Tests have been written with younger candidates in mind. Do please adapt the level of the question to suit older participants.

For example, 'Who were the famous users of kayaks' is supposed to elicit the answer: 'the Eskimos'. If put to an older teenager or adult, the same question could be used, but perhaps phrased as 'do you know the derivation of kayaks, and who first introduced them to Britain?' And maybe we would expect the answer to be 'Inuit' rather than 'Eskimo' - but please don't fail someone on that basis!

SCALE OF RECOMMENDED FEES

The Scale of Recommended Fees which is published in the BCU Members Yearbook is intended for the voluntary sector, and specifically for when voluntary coaches are working on training or assessment courses for qualifications, or giving a public lecture to a canoeing interested group.

Many still give their services for free, of course, and that is to be commended and welcomed.

Where members are earning their own living from the sport, or where they are employed by local authorities or others, it is expected that they will receive the 'going rate' as paid to coaches in other sports at the same level of qualification.

CONTINUED GROWTH

This year's *Members' Yearbook* contains details of about 6,500 courses, some 1,500 more than last year. Those listed are, of course, the 'tip of the iceberg' against the potential total available in Britain. BCU membership continues to grow, and all the signs are that canoeing is still expanding.

In common with many other sports, however, we have seen a decline in regular participation in competition by young people. The appointment of a Youth Development Officer, advertised with this edition of the magazine, is a first major step in an endeavour to reverse this trend.

Your *Members' Yearbook*, circulated with February *Focus* and *CoDe*, contains the names of all the clubs in your region, and every other region. Do please use the *Yearbook* to put those whom you teach, and who show an interest to continue, in touch with a suitable club in their locality.

LCO/RCO ELECTIONS

The following vacancies/elections are occurring.

Wessex

Peter Pendlebury, RCO Wessex for a number of years, has decided to stand down. Nominations are invited for the post of RCO. Nominations must be supported by 2 LCOs or 5 current Coaching members from the Region who are Comprehensive Full (adult) members (includes Comprehensive family adult members). Nominations, together with a short citation (about 50 words) outlining the background of the candidate

date must reach the Director of Coaching at the BCU Office by 30 April 1996. If more than 1 nomination is received, the names of the candidates will be published in the June edition of *CoDe*, together with the citations, and all adult Coaching members in the region will be invited to send in a postal vote.

Devon and Cornwall

LCO Vacancies. Nominations are invited for the post of LCO for the North Devon Panel (area 2) and for Torbay (area 5). Nominations must be proposed and seconded by 2 current Coaching members (as above) of the relevant panel, and sent to the RCO, Janet Bradford, 1 Castle View, Longdown, Exeter EX6 8DB to arrive by 30 April 96. If more than one nomination is received for either post, a panel meeting will be called where an election will be carried out. Only those current adult members attending the meeting in person are entitled to vote.

Wiltshire

Congratulations to Doug Manning, who was re-elected as LCO for Wiltshire on 18 March. 371 Ferndale Rd, Swindon, Wilts SN2 1DE (01793 527051).

STONEHENGE 96

NATIONAL CANOE EXHIBITION

The BCU Coaching Service stand will feature this year at the National Canoeing Exhibition, Pewsey, Wiltshire from 15-16 June

A member of the Coaching staff from the BCU office will be on hand throughout the Exhibition.

This will give good opportunity to discuss outstanding queries members may still have with regard to the changes to the tests and awards system, or any other coaching or BCU matters that may be of concern.

The Exhibition is at the Pewsey Sports Centre, Wilcote Road, Pewsey, Wilts on Saturday and Sunday, 15-16 June from 1000-1700. A Polo Tournament; Come and Try It, and Test a Boat in the Pool; Trade Stands; BCU discipline stands, all feature. Adults £2.00; OAPs, Children £1.00

BRISTOL CITY COACH EDUCATION COURSES

A full programme of National Coaching Foundation Coach Education courses is available through the Bristol City Council Sports Development unit. To obtain a copy of the programme for the year contact Karen Lloyd on 0117 922 3533 (fax 0117 922 3858).

REGIONAL NCF COURSES

Most regions now have a full programme of National Coaching Foundation courses. To obtain a list of those available in your area please phone 0113 274 4802 (fax 0113 275 5019).

'ADVENTURES OF YOUR LIFE-TIME'

A 2-day Conference is planned for 29-30 November in Birmingham under the auspices of the Council for Outdoor Education, Training and Recreation, marking the European Year of Life-long Learning.

The aim of the Conference is to improve understanding of the benefits of outdoor and adventurous experience for all age-groups; to create a higher profile and increased support and resources for outdoor recreation and adventure; to expand awareness of opportunities for participation for all; to enhance recognition of current opportunities and concerns; to establish better communication between all sectors involved; to improve access for all to outdoor and adventurous experience.

Full details available from Roger Putnam, Muncaster Country Guest House, Ravenglass, Cumbria CA18 1RD.

BUOYANCY AIDS

THE EC DIRECTIVE AND STANDARD

Buoyancy aids carrying the EC label marked up 'In accordance with EN 393' are now available. These supersede all previous standards, but those held in stock by retailers may continue to be sold, and those issued to employees, or to paying customers, may continue to be used for the duration of their 'reasonable life'. It has been illegal since 1 July 1995 for a manufacturer to 'place on the market' devices which do not meet the requirements of the Directive on Personal Protective Equipment - conformity to the requirements of the Directive can be established by having the model assessed to the Standard by an approved test house.

The EC standard for the type of buoyancy aid preferred to canoeing is the above - EN 393 - which designates the 50 Newton type. A 50N buoyancy aid provides an upthrust equivalent to supporting 5.5 kg of lead. 50N is the minimum buoyancy which a device designed for a person weighing over 70 kg must contain. Manufacturers are at liberty to put any amount of buoyancy in that they consider necessary, depending on the use to which the BA is to be put. For example, the French are now demanding that buoyancy aids for white water rafting contain 120N for adults! They could still be made to the 50N standard, however, although the 100N standard (EN 395) is probably also suitable in that context. The Standard equivalent to the original BS 3595 Lifejacket is EN 396 (150N).

The 50N standard allows for differing levels of buoyancy against the following scale:

Wearer's weight	30-40	40-50	50-60	60-70	Over 70Kg
Minimum buoyancy	35	40	40	45	50N

A leaflet setting out the whys and wherefores of the situation with regard to buoyancy aids and other canoeing items coming within the scope of the EC Directive on PPE is available from the BCU office on receipt of a sae. An article setting out a suggested method of testing the buoyancy levels is also included.

The problem with juniors

The minimum body weight for which a 50N type BA can be made is 30 kg. A few 6-year-olds can weigh this amount. Others can be nearly 11 before doing so. This means that strictly speaking a number of competent young paddlers - and we have 8 year olds doing well in slalom, for instance - would probably have to wear a 100N type buoyancy aid. Under that standard, for body weights up to 20kg a minimum of 30N is required, and for body weights between 20-30kg, 40N is required. This is not the problem, however. The difficulty is that buoyancy aids under the 100N standard will inevitably have to incorporate a collar, in order to meet the self-righting requirements of the performance test. Also, they have to be red or orange in colour, and incorporate reflective stripes, none of which is likely to be enthusiastically received by committed young paddlers.

Currently we are seeking to have the minimum body weight category replaced with a minimum chronological age category, to address this problem.

Dear CoDe,

I write to express my opinion over the proposal that canoe qualifications should be subject to "revalidation".

I am a kayak senior instructor for both inland and sea. Some of my least enjoyable canoeing memories stem from the training/assessment weekends associated with those awards. I do not enjoy the "canoeing is a wet sport" attitude that pervades

Some concerns

Buoyancy aids made to the requirements of the 50N standard are in appearance very similar to the buoyancy aids traditionally used by canoeists. The main differences now occur in the fact that the cover material must be flame retardant, and the height of the diving board for the jump test is measured with a tape by someone in a white coat! The cost of testing has escalated from the £75 per device charged by the BCU and the Association of Canoe Traders joint panel, to several thousand pounds for a range of a few models from a small manufacturer. A number of specialist suppliers to the canoeing market have disappeared as a result.

Another result of the imposition of the EC Standard is that it is no longer possible for manufacturers to customise buoyancy aids for particular people, such as those who are disabled and may have a special fitting requirement. Nor is it likely that manufacturers will be so innovative as previously. The safety of white water canoeists at the upper levels of performance have been enhanced by the willingness of some specialist manufacturers to listen to the paddlers, and to develop their products accordingly. The costs associated with re-designing are now prohibitive for a comparatively small market.

Making matters worse

The BCU and RYA have been jointly pressing for the simple 50N type device, comprising totally inherent buoyancy, to be given special dispensation and placed in category 1 for assessment purposes. In this case, manufacturers would be able to self-certify that the BA met the requirements of the Directive. It would still have to do so, for any manufacturer making the claim - which by law they would have to do - could, in an extreme case, end up in prison if it were found not to be true. There would therefore be no diminution in standards.

News from the latest meeting of the European working group on buoyancy aids and lifejackets is, however, that there is a desire to see all BAs and LJs placed in the highest category - 3 - of the testing regime classes, on the grounds that they 'protect against mortal danger'. Safety would not be improved, but the cost of testing to the standard would escalate.

GLASGOW SUMMER WATERSPORTS PROGRAMME

KAYAK INSTRUCTOR AND SENIOR
INSTRUCTOR REQUIRED
FIRHILL BASIN, FORTH & CLYDE CANAL, MARYHILL

Mondays-Fridays - 1 July - 2 August 1996 (5 weeks)

1.45 - 4.15pm

Target Group: 14-16 year olds

Rates of pay £7.00/hour Instructor and £8.25/hour Senior Instructor

If interested and available please send a copy of your qualification, your driving licence (if appropriate) and details of instructing experience and a relevant reference to:

Karen McGraw, Community Recreation Section
Glasgow City Council, Parks & Recreation Department
37 High Street, Glasgow G1 1LX

Tel: 0141 287 5808 or Fax: 0141 287 5918

No later than Friday 19 April 1996

Dear CoDe

Dear CoDe,

I write to express my opinion over the proposal that canoe qualifications should be subject to "revalidation".

I am a kayak senior instructor for both inland and sea. Some of my least enjoyable canoeing memories stem from the training/assessment weekends associated with those awards. I do not enjoy the "canoeing is a wet sport" attitude that pervades these events nor do I thrive on the pressures involved in being constantly assessed, for a whole weekend, while I try to perform in a way that satisfies a particular set of examiners own pet foibles, some of which (in my experience) directly contradict what has been taught by others and even themselves on occasions!

My belief is that once someone has been assessed as competent to be a senior instructor then that qualification should remain for at least as long as that person remains active within the sport and discipline involved. Experience is a far greater learning tool than any training/assessment course, if someone is performing in a particular field then they will be unable to avoid being part of a constant learning process. Perhaps submission of one's log book once every 2-3 years to check that a particular member is still active rather than any "full blown" revalidation is all that is really needed. The only practical revalidation I can see that maybe worthwhile is a first aid qualification, after all we do not often have to cope with real first aid situations therefore there may be some justification in keeping this aspect of a canoeing qualification up-dated.

I have a limited amount of time and money to give to canoeing, at quite some personal expense I have acquired the qualifications and equipment needed to lead groups onto our rivers and seas, something which I do purely for enjoyment. If any revalidation process is going to cause a drain on either my time or my finances I would have to assess/justify that expenditure and consider whether or not my membership of the coaching scheme is worth while. If, after consideration of the facts, I took the decision to allow my qualifications to lapse I would then see very little point in remaining a BCU member. I would continue to paddle but would stop leading groups where there were people under 18 present. Although I write only for myself I am not alone.

In summary then the proposal to revalidate any coaching qualification will have 4 effects.

- 1 People will be deterred from entering the coaching scheme
- 2 There would be an exodus of coaching scheme members which in turn would lead to...
- 3 Less introductory sessions, therefore a general slowing down of people taking up the sport and becoming BCU members.
- 4 A greater number of people out there who are competent canoeists but who are not BCU members and therefore will not be updated on any canoeing access agreements etc and who will be tempted to run rivers whenever they feel like it, thus making access agreements harder to negotiate/review.

I have now made my opinion known, thank you for time spent reading this

CLIVE ASHFORD, Plymouth

Dear CoDe,

In reply to Mr Sturgess in your last issue.

Mr Sturgess warns us that 'a new professional era is dawning!' Welcome to the real world Mr Sturgess. The government, public, parents and schools are demanding higher standards from those that run outdoor pursuits courses. The poorly named, Activity Centres (Young Persons' Safety) Act contains many anomalies.

Why are adults excluded - should they not expect the same

standard of care?

Why has surfing been excluded?

Why do outdoor organisations have to pay to be inspected - the inspection of building sites and catering establishments by the HSE is funded by the government?

Why do we have the Act at all when the HSE believes outdoor activities to be relatively safe?

However, what 'Water Land and Air' think about the act is largely irrelevant... it is on its way and all organisations running activities outlined in the Act will have to be licenced. Schools and colleges have been excluded because they are already inspected by the HSE. WLA believes this is a mistake. Clubs are specifically excluded from the bill and WLA believes this to be a correct decision. We do not want clubs to stop training their members and do not want the situation to arise where everyone who goes paddling must go with a qualified person. Schools, colleges and canoe clubs should be aware that if they are charging for courses they could come under the remit of the act.

Clubs are the backbone of canoeing and long may they continue free and unhindered by excessive laws and regulations. However, people young and old have a right to a high standard, professional course from anyone who is charging them. WLA think that the job of a 'professional' instructor is on a par with nurses and teachers, and at the higher echelons with headmasters and ward sisters. If that is the case then the world of outdoor activities should have comparable training.

The BCU was set up to foster the interests of canoeing and not those of the professional instructor. However, the outdoor world and the government have latched onto the awards as qualifications to work at outdoor organisations. This has put the BCU in the awkward position of having to create a series of awards suitable for the outdoor world and canoeing, a difficult task.

WLA believes that there should be two level of qualifications - one for those working in clubs, and one for those working professionally. WLA has never been able to understand how a BCU examiner normally employed as an engineer, dustman, doctor can train and assess someone to work professionally as an instructor at an outdoor organisation.

Mr Sturgess is obviously not a monkey and WLA regrets any inference that he was. Volunteer instructors and examiners provide a fantastic service as club instructors to club members but they do not always have the day to day experience working with the variety of groups that would enable them to train and assess professional instructors. An analogy would be a first aider and a paramedic - the former offers a valuable service that cannot be provided by paramedic, but I know who I would want if I was in serious need of help.

For this reason 'Water Land and Air' do not employ anyone just on the basis of a BCU award. We do not think the work 'qualification' is appropriate. It must also be backed up with wide experience and a probationary period working alongside us.

It is wrong for anyone to presume something about anyone else. If Mr Sturgess had contacted us, he would have discovered that WLA agrees with him - that clubs should not be part of the Jamieson Act, which is the reason we excluded them from our comments in our newsletter.

Mr Sturgess makes other points:

I do not know of a club SI who assesses those he had trained. He is probably correct - but we do know of those that get their mate to do it! We are professional instructors, and we are quite happy to assess people we have trained. We have no qualms about failing someone if they do not come up to the standard required, but we also gain immense pleasure from seeing someone we have trained come for assessment, put up a good performance and pass. We do see problems in assessing friends, and after a bad experience now refuse to do so.

After all, centres have been known to kill people. Correct, but this just highlights the problem. The instructors had no award/qualification or experience, and minimal training, but were they members of a club?

Dear CoDe continued

(Referring to the above point) *I have never heard of a club doing so.* Is Mr Sturgess telling us that no one has died on a club trip because of a wrong decision by someone... I find that hard to believe?

If it ain't broke why fix it. The qualifications/awards system in the outdoors has been broken for years but people accepted it, until someone, unfortunately resulting after the death of young people, stood up and said something. An overhaul of the awards system for outdoor activities was long overdue.

Finally, Mr Sturgess, I am sorry that you haven't heard about us because we hadn't heard about you. WLA runs the widest range of outdoor activities to the highest standards. We are approved by the BCU/WCA, MLTB, BSA, BOF, BHPA and all our instructors are highly qualified and experienced. If Mr Sturgess or anyone else would like further information on WLA, Activity Centres (Young Persons' Safety) Act, NVQs, awards/qualifications in general or would like to discuss points raised by this letter would you please contact us on 01792 464073.

Dr ALUN RICHARDSON and Mr BILL BEYNON

Dr Alun Richardson - SI Sea, SI Inland, MLTB MIA, MLTB Winter MLA, ABMG aspirant, BSA Coach Level 1, PCGE Outdoor Education, NCA CLA 1, NVQ assessor and trainer, BHPA trainee instructor and more.

Mr Bill Beynon - BCU Aspirant Coach Level 5 (Inland), more BCU awards than you could shake a stick at, MLTB MIA, Winter MLA, MIC trainee, BSA coach level 1, NCA CLA Level 1, NVQ assessor and trainer and verifier, Cert Ed and much more.

Dear CoDe,

The case for Membership

I am personally against compulsory membership of the BCU. The reasons I believe are clear and obvious, some even arising from your own publication.

Comparison with the RYA - as a Dinghy Instructor I have the choice, being a member or paying the re-validation. I am not a member, at present, of the RYA.

I am a member of the BMC, a different comparison. The BMC Technical committee comes up with useful information on gear failures, testing new gear etc, but does not tell its members what to do. Yet CoDe 67 page 10 does! Does this mean that if I turn up with my throwline (with handle) I am now going to be criticised without even seeing what I can do with the thing!

The new Surf SI - unobtainable to average surfers who can run a safe surf session but can't break down and instruct technical moves so complicated that only performance boats or skis can cope with it. Looks to me that the equipment is on test!

The BCU hold the monopoly, working in the outdoors I have to have your qualifications, I have no choice. Yet I regard the BCU as so puffed up with its own self importance it is a joke. Policies seem to be fixed by fanatics who want to fix everything so tightly that there is no room for individual flare. No offence to the individuals maybe its the system that needs looking at.

I believe its all about enjoying canoeing and kayaking safely and not about if my throwline has a handloop in it.

Look to yourself and what you provide to those that don't live and breath the perfect paddle stroke and you may find why you are sometimes criticised over your compulsory membership.

PHILIP BRITTON, Gwynedd

DofC Comments: The RYA has, I understand, recently introduced a system whereby those who choose to be members payless for assessment and re-validation than non-members. If the BMC Technical committee highlights a gear failure, I

am sorry that Philip Britton feels the BCU to be 'puffed up with its own importance'. From what members tell me about other organisations, I cannot believe that the BCU compares badly in its endeavour to inform and consult, and to reflect the consensus view. It is a frustrating situation, in that those involved at our end seem to spend their whole lives racing around trying to consult with everyone, only to find that in spite of everything, in the final analysis, there are hundreds, if not thousands of members out there, who feel totally isolated from the debates. We can only assume, however, that any cross-section of members meeting in a forum will come to roughly the same conclusions as any other cross-section of members - given time to consider all the arguments and counter-arguments. If the handloop on your throw line leads to the death of the swimmer involved, they could hardly be said to be enjoying the experience in safety!

Dear CoDe,

The GREAT THROWBAG DEBATE. What debate? The first I heard about it was when it was announced that the BCU policy had changed. It was an item on the agenda at BCU Safety panel meeting I was at, at the time. "Consideration of the revised recommendations concerning throwbags". We were then told that this had now been implemented. The trade was not consulted. The first the trade heard was when the directive arrived through their letter boxes. Two weeks prior to this directive the Coaching Conference was held and this policy change was not mentioned.

There was no open debate.

Who decided this policy? Was anyone other than a group of safety course providers consulted?

Let's have an explanation!

DAVE MANBY

DofC comments: We were faced with a dilemma. It had obviously become accepted among those leading the way on white water safety, that the thrower's end of a line should be 'clean'. It is really basic common sense - it is surely obvious that there is a risk of 'snagging' if there is a knot, handle, or anything other than a clean end to a rope. What had evidently become generally accepted practice was mentioned at a white water safety forum. Military personnel present reported back, and concern was expressed from the military as to the implications if they did not take action on the information. Quite clearly, the ideal would have been for a re-appraisal of throw line design to have taken place, and for the users and manufacturers to have been consulted - which we seek to do in the normal course of events. On this issue, however, what appeared to have become an accepted principle among those leading the way in this field, had not been articulated, and put forward for debate. We were faced with having to make a swift decision with regard to the advice given, and work the debate backwards, after that. There are obvious legal implications in both not acting, and in acting, and I accept that the way this particular issue arose caught us out. Dave will know that there is consultative machinery. Because of his undoubted ability, expertise and experience, he is a member of the White Water Safety Working Party of the National Coaching Committee.

This is comprised of members of the trade, paddlers, and coaching members. In the normal course of events the WWSWP would have had this issue highlighted and debated, and the manufacturers directly involved would have been consulted, in advance of any public announcement.

Dear CoDe,

Outdoor Education: Canoeing and Academic Learning - letter in last issue.

It is always good to find discussion which informs the, usually personal, meaning of outdoor 'education', 'pursuits', development training', environmental studies', field studies' and so

on. What is not so helpful in misinformation. The National Association for Outdoor Education (NAOE) has a mission statement *which encompasses all these terms*, not merely 'pursuits' as the writer states. 'Personal and Social Development' is the target work area of the NAOE and outdoor adventures - *of mind, body, spirit and emotion* - are all within its mission statement; "Such personal experience enhances the quality of life, strengthens the process of self discovery, builds a sense of community and creates respect for the environment".

The Field Studies Council The National Association of Field Studies Officers, together with youth work, advisory work, development training, community development, FE and HE as well as main-stream education/National Curriculum in those areas of the UK to which this applies all have formal representation within NAOE, since the vehicle of delivery may be any and all of the above. Perhaps the April 18/19th 96 joint Outdoor Education Adviser's Panel/NAOE conference, which looks at each aspect of the National, Whole and Specialised Curriculum, would be a good place for the writer to find out about the UK holistic approach to outdoor education, where people, environment and activity each have their place and opportunities.. and we are doing very well. An integrated approach amongst those *with* whom we work is a good place to model integrated work to those *for* whom we work..

IAN LEWIS, Vice Chair NAOE

ASSESSOR TRAINING

A BCU Assessor Training Day must be attended by those who aspire to become Assessors for BCU qualifications. This does not apply to those who became grade 2 Examiners (E2) prior to 31 December 1995, or who had obtained at least one signature in their Examiner's Log Book towards obtaining E2 status prior to 31 December 1995. Their current rights continue, either to assess (E2) or to continue to fulfil the requirements of the Log Book prior to recommendation for grade 2 Examiner status.

The only requirement for those now aspiring to become Assessors, is to have been a minimum of a level 2 Coach (Instructor) for at least 3 years. The 3 years qualifying time commences from the date that the full award - ie level 2 Coach (not Trainee status) - was first confirmed.

Successful completion of the course gives the candidate the status of grade 1 Assessor (A1) able to test for the 4 Star (Proficiency) relevant to the qualification held, and to assist on level 1 and level 2 Coach courses.

A Log Book is provided for candidates. Satisfactory assistance, to the standard set out, on the prescribed number of level 1 and level 2 coach courses can lead to a recommendation for grade 2 Assessor status. Grade 2 Assessors are chief assessors on level 1 courses, and continue to assist on level 2.

Those who are level 3 Coaches (Senior Instructor) may progress to grade 3 Assessor status on a similar basis. Grade 3 Assessors are chief assessors for level 2 Coach courses, and continue to assist on level 3 courses.

The following dates are currently available. Further courses will be organised on a regional basis during the rest of the year, and announced in future editions of *CoDe*. Applications to the BCU office please. A nominal fee of £10 will be charged, which includes coffee, lunch and tea.

Thursday 11 April - Nottingham

Saturday 18 May - Nottingham

S/NVQ Assessor

BCU Assessor Training courses are quite independent of S/NVQ Assessor training. However, those who are S/NVQ Assessors (ie who hold units D32, D33) from another sport or industry, do not need to attend the BCU Assessor Training course. Provided the candidate has been a minimum of a level 2 Coach (Instructor) as for at least 3 years, they can register with the BCU office as a grade 1 Assessor, and proceed as above.

Members who are level 2 Coaches or above, and who have held a level 2 qualification - not Trainee status - for at least 3 years, who are not grade 2 Examiners (E2) and who wish to register as grade 1 Assessors (A1) should send a copy of their D32/D33 S/NVQ Assessor certification to the BCU office for registration as a grade 1 Assessor (A1) eligible to assist on level 1 and 2 coach courses as above.

Those who wish to examine for S/NVQ awards, must first become BCU Assessors. At present only level 2 Coach is available as an S/NVQ and so grade 3 Assessor status (A3) is necessary (or a current E2).

A course for BCU grade 2 Examiners (or A3 Assessors) who wish to become S/NVQ Assessors is available:

2-3 July - Nottingham - fee £45: includes overnight accommodation and food.

Those grade 2 Examiners (E2) or grade 3 Assessors (A3) who are already an accredited S/NVQ Assessor in another sport or industry, need attend the first day only, for which the fee is £15. Applications to the BCU office please.

4 Star or Proficiency ?

There is still some confusion over whether the Proficiency test is the 4-Star, or whether 4 Star is now Proficiency.

Please be clear that the original 4 and 5 Star Tests, based on performance on white water or surf, have been discontinued. Their syllabi no longer exist. They have been replaced by the Proficiency and Advanced Proficiency Tests. The syllabi determine journeying ability and preparedness. Any increase in the performance criteria of strokes and techniques involved is only in line with the general development of canoeing standards.

The Proficiency Test is now called 4 Star, and the Advanced Proficiency Test is now called 5 Star, merely to avoid a proliferation of names.

If in doubt, please look up the original syllabi and compare them.

THE ROLE OF THE ROLL

The great 'rolling' debate

Should, or should not, an ability to roll be an integral part of the 4-Star (Proficiency) test? At its meeting on 9 March the National Coaching Committee once again became entangled in the 'rolling' issue. This time it was as a result of some members wanting to re-address the matter of the demonstration of a roll on flat water being a requirement for the 4-Star (Proficiency) Test for both Inland and Sea kayak.

At the meeting of 10 February which was intended to finalise the syllabi, the requirement had been dropped from the Sea test, because of objections received from the field. Subsequent to that, however, coaching panels in Wales, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and some English regions, had expressed dismay at the decision to do so.

The bones of the issue are that rolling is a safety feature for white water canoeing, and sea canoeing, and should be regarded as a routine part of the repertoire of strokes and techniques which a paddler needs to acquire and develop in order to be competent on white water or the sea.

Modern boat design, and modern teaching technique, make rolling very easy to learn, and virtually every regular paddler can do so, anyway.

The obvious exception to this is the racing fraternity, but there is a separate 'Placid Water' progression for those pursuing that activity, which does not require rolling.

It should also be noted that Canoes are not normally rolled, and they are regarded as suitable vessels for negotiating grade 2-3 white water, in competent hands, and are also used on the sea - but this should only be by those who really know what they are doing.

The members of the Coaching Committee opposed to the inclusion of a compulsory roll at 4-Star (Proficiency) level, did not disagree with the opening sentiments, above. Their concern, however, centred around the fact that it is not true to say that every canoeist who journeys on grade 2-(3) water or along stretches of coast line which could be termed as of 'moderate' difficulty only - provided those involved know what they are doing - has routine access to facilities to learn to roll, nor even an inclination to want to do so.

Some would claim that such paddlers are, in fact, in the majority, although it is difficult to see where the evidence is for that contention - and it is almost certainly not the case within the membership of the BCU and the National Associations.

The purpose of the tests

The purpose of the 4-Star (Proficiency) Test, has always been, and remains, as a sort of 'driving licence'. Its terms of reference state that the holder has shown themselves competent to undertake journeys in the prescribed conditions under competent leadership. It has been widely used as a 'marker' by outside bodies, such as local authorities, and national youth organisations. In that context there are many thousands of people who over the years have achieved the proficiency test without becoming involved in rolling.

Those numbers are now less than they were, but as about ??? Proficiency (4 Star) tests are undertaken annually, whilst only about ??? members become Trainee Senior Instructors, there is clearly a market for the test outside of the needs of the Coaching Service. A rolling requirement would be a significant deterrent to a percentage of these.

The validity of this statement is confirmed by the vociferous minority who have expressed dismay at the previous inclusion of a compulsory rolling component within the 4 Star

(Proficiency) syllabus.

The Coaching Committee achieved what is hopefully an acceptable compromise. The inland and sea kayak tests now state that where the boat in use is of type suitable for rolling, the candidate should be able to demonstrate a roll on flat water, but that an inability to do so is not a fail factor provided the candidate's all round performance is sound.

Different strokes for different folks?

The real issue is one of differing philosophies. The 'flat water' tourist will 'shoot' the odd grade 2 rapid, and enjoy doing so, but only because it is part of his or her journey. It is the covering of a reasonable distance, the sheer physical enjoyment of paddling, and the access to the watery environment, which is the reason for their journey.

The only strokes and techniques such paddlers really need are a good, relaxed, cruising stroke, the ability to stop, a reasonable recovery stroke, a draw stroke, and, for inland canoeing, an ability to perform a simple, reverse ferry glide. The white water tourist on the other hand, is there to enjoy working out on the rapids, and often finds having to paddle the bits in between as somewhat of a boring inconvenience - if not an imposition!

To be a successful white water paddler, all the strokes and techniques defined in the Star Tests, are essential building blocks to competence, as is the development of sound rolling ability.

Similarly on the sea, there are those who have 'cruised' in moderate conditions all their lives, and use their knowledge and experience to avoid getting into the types of conditions which other sea paddlers routinely seek out, and would consider the trip as having been too tame, without!

We really need two tests, or at least a separation of the 'white water' strokes and techniques from the basic touring strokes and techniques. The principles of preparedness for journeying in the way of being self sufficient, and able to cope with the effects of cold conditions, and so forth, are mutual.

Hopefully the compromise which has been determined will adequately address the issue.

What is the 'logic' of it all?

To return to the 'nub' of the debate. Are we clear as to what it is we are trying to achieve? Is the reason for including a roll in the Proficiency (4 Star) Test:

- 1 To indicate that this is a basic safety technique which anyone should master who is to seriously pursue 'white water' canoeing, whether on the sea or inland? or
- 2 Because it is unsafe to paddle on white water or the sea without being able to roll?

I have no problem with the first reason. The second raises some side issues, however.

It implies that those taking groups on the required preparatory journeys for the Proficiency (4 Star) test must ensure that everyone can roll before accepting them on the trips.

It also implies that the roll must be of a reliable and consistent quality - not tested merely as a 'one off' on flat water.

Hopefully there can be no argument but that the first reason is the purpose for the inclusion of rolling, and therefore the compromise agreed is sensible and workable, and caters for differing philosophies and attitudes, without further complicating the system.



Plas y Brenin



The National Mountain Centre

New courses and training initiatives developed in conjunction with the BCU.

With the advent of the new award scheme there will be increased demand for some existing training provision as well as a need for new provision, particularly relating to the new Level 4 Coach award. With an increased awareness and commitment to standards in coaching other, non-award specific, courses have also been developed to help people develop their own paddling technique and skills.

White Water Safety & Rescue.

The new Level 4 award will be available to those who are a level 3 coach (SI) and hold a 5 Star (Advanced Proficiency). To be awarded your 5 Star you must have proof of attending an approved White Water Safety course. In order to satisfy the expected demand for White Water Safety & Rescue courses we have programmed extra dates this year (Plas y Brenin has fully accredited staff), the price of the course is £90 non residential. The dates are as follows.

27/28 April

25/26 May

22/23 June

13/14 July

7/8 September

Towards Level 4

A new course which is programmed for **25/29 November**. The 25th and 26th will comprise a Level 3 assessment, the 27th a Safety & Rescue element. On the 28th and 29th there will be an option of 5 Star training or 5 Star assessment, depending on your needs. You may also join the course for individual elements. The price will be pro-rata. The price for the full five days is £285 fully residential.

Coaching Processes

This new course, a pre-requisite for the new Level 4 Coach Award is a non residential two day course concentrating on how to teach in more challenging environments.

Cost £90. Dates 26/27 October

Skills development courses.

Paddling technique coaching

A two day non-residential personal skills coaching course which will

Diagnose an individual's paddling strengths & weaknesses, provide personal coaching, design a long term personal paddling development plan to take away.

Price £90. Dates 15/16 June, 20/21 July.

Two day rolling clinics (aka sort your rolling out!)

A non residential coaching course which will use our pool, lake and river to allow the student to develop a strong and dependable roll in a variety of conditions.

Price £75. Date 6/7 July, 10/11 August.

Plas y Brenin, The National Mountain Centre, Capel Curig, Gwynedd, LL24 0ET.

'Phone 01690 720280/720366.

Fax 01690 720394

REFINING THE BASICS

by Peter Griffiths

The basic techniques and principles of open canoe paddling and rescues began to be formally articulated in Canada in the 1950s and underwent an evolutionary leap between then and the 1970s, culminating in the publication of Bill Mason's *Path of the Paddle* in 1980. This work remains unsurpassed as the central reference text for describing and explaining the variety of strokes and their application to flat and moving water situations. Nonetheless, while it is probably fair to say that the essential skills of open canoeing have been adequately covered in the printed word and are unlikely to be fundamentally modified in the future, room still exists for development and refinement. The following four snippets represent some observations made during instructing and personal paddling which I hope readers might find useful if the occasion to apply them arises.

The starting stroke

This term was coined by trainees on an annual introductory course I organise. When learning to handle a canoe solo, many novices experience considerable trouble keeping a straight line during the initial stage of moving off from still. They begin with a power stroke that often contains a bit of a sweep, the canoe veers away from the paddle side, they correct with a j-stroke or stern pry and by the time the bow has swung back on line all forward momentum has been lost. With the canoe now stationary again, the to-and-fro cycle is repeated and, after several attempts, the net effect is mounting frustration but little if any forward progress. To break this potentially vicious circle

of irritation and failure, I have found it advantageous to teach trainees to start propelling the canoe forward with a compound stroke rather than a simple power stroke. The so-called Starting Stroke consists of a bow draw blending into a J-stroke. The bow draw swings the bow towards the paddle side prior to forward power being applied. If the turning force of the draw equals and opposes the turning effect of the power stroke, the canoe should move away from the stationary position in a straight line, allowing the paddler then to make only

minor steering corrections with a corrective-J, stern rudder or pry. Some trainees construe the Starting Stroke as a C-stroke and certainly the configuration is very close. However, it is important to distinguish the two as the true C-stroke produces an inside turn and therefore properly belongs within the pivot-stroke family, whereas the Starting Stroke has a special application at the point of moving off and differs fundamentally in not containing the heavy-J that would be required to conclude a perfect C-stroke.

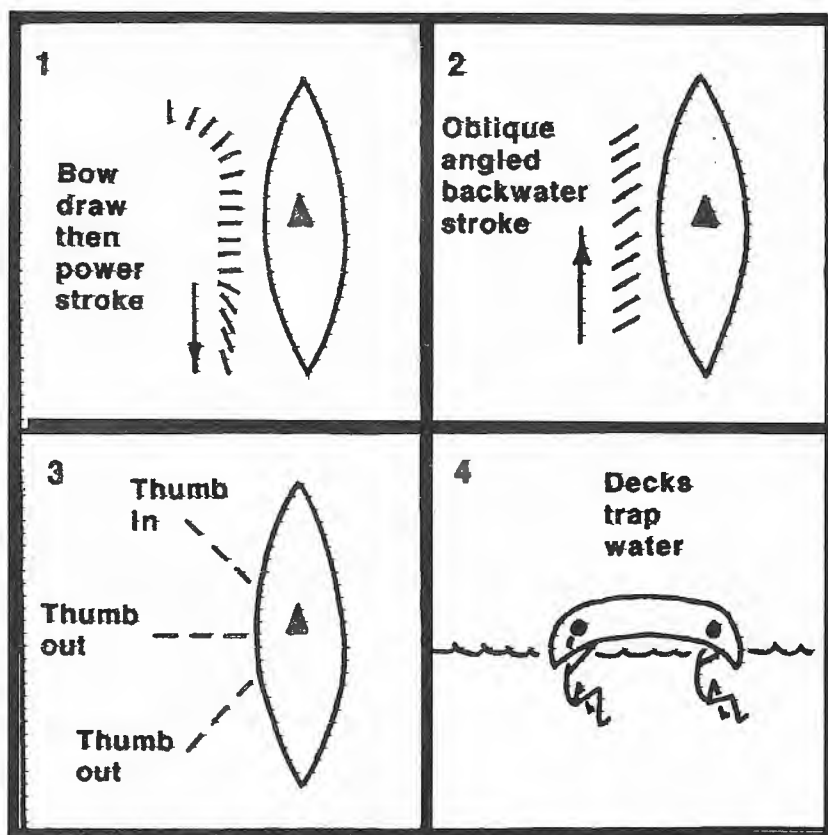
The braking sideslip

When running obstacle-studded rapids in an open canoe, there is no substitute for time. Weight, drag, keels and tracking hulls are all features that can impair manoeuvrability and increase the risk of collision with rocks and swamping in waves. Buying time is the simplest way of compensating for the inertia and sluggishness of many canoes. Short of eddying out, the only way to buy time while in a current is to slow down by means of back-

water strokes. With obstacles thus approaching more slowly, precious seconds become available for perceiving hazards, judging the best route, setting angles and ferrying. So goes the theory. Unfortunately, there is a law of perversity that states that even in the best planned route there will be a malevolent, heavily-disguised rock just below the surface that you failed to see in advance and which decides to reveal itself by popping up in front of the bow at the last moment.

Sideslipping with a simple pry or a draw may not be quick or powerful enough to prevent contact. However, a few milliseconds of time can be bought with a Braking Sideslip. What is re-

quired is a strong backwater stroke but, instead of the blade being held at right angles to the keel line, it is angled backwards, obliquely to the direction of travel, the non-drive face doing the work. This stroke not only displaces the canoe laterally away from the paddle side but simultaneously exerts a fairly hefty braking force. Inevitably, the shaft of the paddle will slide along the gunwale, such are the pressures on the blade. Dynamically, the Braking Sideslip resembles the forward component of the reverse scull or sculling pry but is alto-



gether a much coarser stroke. It comes into its own in an emergency situation such as avoiding an unforeseen rock; nevertheless, it can be used, perhaps as a series of repeated strokes, when well up-river of an obstacle to achieve a sideslip away from the paddle side that is accompanied by minimal downstream progress. Its limitations will be evident in tight predicaments which unfortunately disallow sideslipping away from the paddle side and where there is insufficient time to switch.

Drawstroke recovery

Trainees often ask how the submerged blade of a paddle should be recovered during multiple drawstrokes: when the blade is knifed back out from the gunwale should the thumb of the upper hand point inwards or outwards when extended? There is probably no hard and fast rule about this other than to do whatever comes naturally to the skeleto-muscular system. Amongst fellow paddlers, the consensus seems to be that for draws performed at right-angles to the keel-line, the wrist's natural tendency is to twist so that the thumb points outwards during the recovery phase. The same principle appears to apply to diagonal draws done from the stern, most people feeling more comfortable with the thumb pointing outwards on the recovery. When the issue turns to diagonal draws done from the bow, however, there may be a case for reversing this (literal) rule of thumb and for pointing it inwards on the recovery. This question could be answered empirically, at least in terms of establishing the proportion of canoeists expressing a preference for one way over the other. So if anyone is looking for a small, questionnaire-based or observational research project, here is a possible topic!

Sheerline and the Capistrano flip

I am grateful to Duncan McKinnon and Chris Clark of Stirling Canoe Club for identifying this problem and demonstrating its solution. The conventional wisdom when rescuing a swamped canoe by means of the Capistrano flip is for two rescuers to swim under the inverted hull, break the suction by raising one gunwale, then push upwards asymmetrically so that the canoe falls on the surface upright and near-empty. Recently, some five-metre canoes have become available that may prove popular purchases with clubs because of their low-budget price. The snag is they have such a pronounced sheerline as to render the normal flip difficult, if not impossible. This is because the high stem and stern stay submerged when the raised hull is upside down even though most of the hull space is clear of the water. The decking traps a sufficient weight of water to resist rotation when the attempt is made to flip the canoe. In our experience, the way around this problem is as follows.

- 1) The swimmers roll the swamped canoe so it is floating upright.
- 2) Next they position themselves as near the ends of the canoe as space inside will safely allow.
- 3) They then roll the canoe over themselves upside down to empty the hull, treading water very vigorously in an endeavour to keep the ends clear.
- 4) Finally, the instant the lower gunwale has cleared the surface, in one continuous movement they flip the canoe upright. In this sequence the canoe may not become fully inverted over the swimmers as in the usual method. Some water will almost inevitably remain to be bailed out, but at least the canoe will be stable and boardable.



EXPERIENCED CANOEISTS to work with children at programme in ARDECHE France, from May to August 1996. Should be Senior Instructor for River Leader and at least BCU Canoe Instructor for support positions. Must be over 21 ideally with other outdoor and language skills. Very good allowance and room, board and insurance provided.

For further information and an application form, write to;

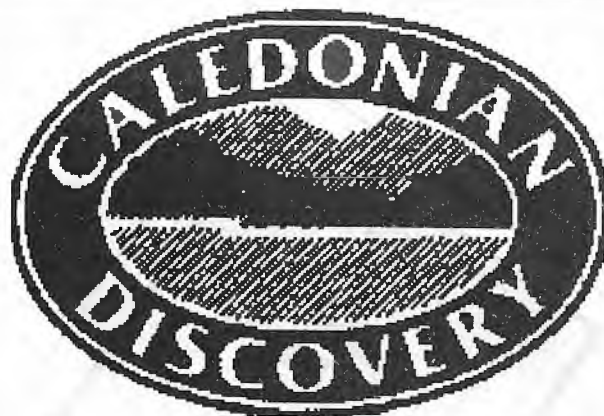
Dept. 125

Village Camps

CH- 1854 LEYSIN

Switzerland

or Fax us on; 00 41 25 34 32 76



Caledonian Discovery

We have two seasonal vacancies for our mobile outdoor centre, the barge 'Fingal of Caledonia'. We offer activity holidays touring the Great Glen between Fort William & Inverness.

Instructor Applicants should have experience of leading groups in open canoeing and mountain walking.

Assistant Instructor/Bosun Likely to attract a young person who wishes to develop skills and gain experience. A keen interest in outdoor sports is essential.

For further details phone 01397 772167

IT'S STAR TEST TIME !

MORE GOOD NEWS!!

There is no change in price: star tests are still £2.50 per test including badge and certificate *

The revised syllabi are in your Directory. A sample of the new Test Entry Form is enclosed (*please copy this as you require*)

A PRE-PAID HOT LINE ORDER FORM is enclosed. Please separate this from the sample star test entry form and get in your order for the new badges. The usual bulk order rates will apply.

... and for younger children

Have you tried the new Rainbow Badge Scheme ?

The scheme is aimed particularly at those of Primary School age. There is no re-design of this badge scheme.

Details are in your Directory

The free marking cards can be ordered with the HOT LINE ORDER FORM

The star test badges and certificates have been re-designed due to sponsorship received from YAK and the Sports Match Trust. The sponsorship award has been given with several specific aims targeted.

The improvement of BCU Coaching resources and certification

Encourage 'grass roots' coaching and paddling

Help younger paddlers feed into competition disciplines

