

CANOEING MAGAZINE

# CANOEING

N°71 DECEMBER 1983 Seventy Pence



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Canoesport Magazine



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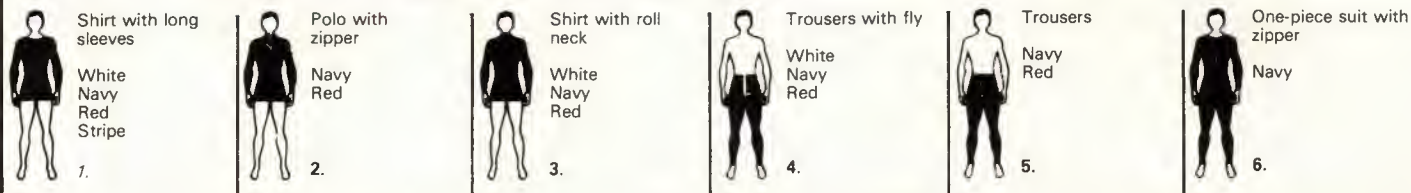
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# CANOEING

INCORPORATING CANOEING IN BRITAIN AND CANOEING MAGAZINE

## DECEMBER — NUMBER 71

Editor: Mike Clark

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### CONTENTS

|                              |    |                                 |    |
|------------------------------|----|---------------------------------|----|
| Notes and News .....         | 6  | Events .....                    | 14 |
| Events .....                 | 7  | Wye Festival .....              | 15 |
| Llangollon Images .....      | 8  | Gentle Exe.....                 | 16 |
| Mike Jones Weekend .....     | 9  | Barra and The Uists .....       | 17 |
| The Perfect River .....      | 10 | The Dancer .....                | 20 |
| Dare the Wildest River ..... | 12 | Crystal Palace Exhibition ..... | 23 |
| Books.....                   | 14 | Trade News .....                | 24 |

COVER: *Sunset — the lure of sea canoeing.*



*The Dancer kayak on the Dee — see page 20.*

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# Notes & News

## SPORTS COUNCIL CHAIRMAN CALLS FOR RANDOM DRUGS TESTING

**Dick Jepps, chairman of the Sports Council,** called for an end to the apathy and evasion that prevents the expansion of random drugs tests in British sport.

Speaking in London at the beginning of November, when he presented the Council's 1982-83 Annual Report, Mr Jepps criticised sports which had not introduced random tests or, in many cases, tests of any kind.

He said: *'Unless cheats and the bio-chemists are to be given a free hand, it is time that more sports declared themselves willing to fight this scourge.'*

*'There is no excuse for sports to claim that drug testing costs too much because the Sports Council makes it easy with 100 per cent subsidies. The real problems are apathy, ignorance and evasion.'*

During 1982-83, only 14 sports governing bodies undertook tests. The Council's Report notes that success in introducing tests had been slow, *'requiring painstaking effort, determination and tenacity in the face of what is all too often sheer indifference.'*

The Amateur Rowing Association is one of the few sports to have taken up the Sports Council's offer of free drug tests analysis.

The Sports Council has led the fight against drugs in sport by its subsidies to governing bodies, its funding of the Drug Control and Teaching Centre at Chelsea College, plus grants towards new research.

In July last year, the Sports Council supplied the Drugs Centre with a new mass spectrometer which has greatly increased the capacity of the Centre to deal with a large volume of samples in a shorter time.

Some other European countries have taken a stronger line on drugs in sport. In France the prohibition on drugs in sport has been given the force of law. In Denmark and Norway, independent groups of sampling officers have been established by governing with power to conduct random tests.

## CASH GRANTS FOR SCOTTISH CANOEISTS

The Scottish Sports Aid Foundation has announced its latest list of cash awards amounting to £2,620 which is shared among 25 Scottish sportsmen and women. Once again, Scottish Canoeists fare well in these awards which range from £100 to £150.

Alastair Currie (aged 18) of 50 Rushbank, Livingston, Anthony Leaver (aged 19) of 44 Greenbank Gardens, Edinburgh, Iain Simpson (aged 18) of 55 Westerlea Drive, Bridge of Allan, Susan Ward (aged 20) of 3 Brucefield Fues, Dunfermline, and Jane Wilson (aged 25) of 13 Marchmont Crescent, Edinburgh, have each been awarded £100 by the SSAF for showing promise in Canoeing.

The SSAF's main aim is to give Scotland's sporting hopes a better chance of success at national and international levels. To this end, it awards these cash grants to sportsmen and women who have

already achieved success at a high level, concentrating on competitors poised to breakthrough into international honours. To date, the SSAF has awarded grants to 477 people totalling £48,385.

## ECOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE RIVER THAMES

**Thames Water has signed a £65,000 contract** for an ecological study to be carried out by the Institute of Hydrology, the Institute for Marine Environmental Research and the Freshwater Biological Association.

The work involves using computer models of the River Thames to simulate the effects of varying the river flow, and then evaluating whether the variations are likely to have any effect on the ecology above or below Teddington Weir. The models will be used to study oxygen levels, salinity and siltation — the most important factors influencing the biology of the river. Particular emphasis will be given to assessing any possible effects on fish.

The reason for the study is a proposal — which Thames Water will put forward next year — seeking to remove the statutory flow constraint which requires a minimum flow over Teddington Weir of 170 mgd (million gallons a day) or 50mgd in drought conditions.

Thames Water believes that the statutorily protected flow is no longer needed to maintain water quality in the Tideway. The Authority also feels that the Drought Order procedure, which has to be negotiated to remove even the 50mgd minimum flow in a severe drought, takes too long to put into operation that the river finally suffers more than it need.

Instead the Authority wants to manage the river in the most flexible way taking account of all the competing interests for which it has responsibility.

In drought years this would mean that the river flow could be reduced earlier in the year or when water was still available, which is not possible under present regulations without a Drought Order.

*An excellent cartoon from the AKC-Tip Club*



Navigation will be protected because river levels would still be maintained by adjusting sluice gates at the Authority's weirs.

However, Thames Water is also anxious to ensure that the river ecology will not be significantly affected by the proposed change in current river management practice.

The independent study's report is due for publication in the spring of 1984.

## FOSTER'S TO PROVIDE £200,000

**Today, the Foster's Sports Foundation** announced their decision to spend £200,000 in the coming year in supporting minority sports, following the enormous success of their activities to date.

Set up in August 1981, the Foster's Sports Foundation has already put over £150,000 behind minority sports, giving direct sponsorship support to different sports bodies — from surfing, boardsailing and parachuting to korfbal.

At an October meeting of the Foster's Sports Foundation Panel another 171 applications were considered by Chairman Dick Jepps CBE, and Panel members, Sharron Davies, Lyn Davies, David Wilkie, Bill Beaumont, Desmond Lynam. The list of allocations is below.

During the next 12 months, the Foster's Sports Foundation will also continue their support for major surfing, canoeing and boardsailing events and the world's most exciting endurance event — the Foster's Quadrathon.

Asked to comment on this renewed sponsorship commitment, Dick Jepps said, *'In this pre-Olympic year, much attention is being focused on major sports champions in athletics, swimming and riding, for example. It is heartening to see Watney Mann & Truman Brwers, a major national company, putting its weight behind some of our less well-known activities in their quest for Olympic medals. For my part, I am delighted to continue this association with the Foster's Sports Foundation and to play any part I can in supporting it.'*

The next meeting of the Panel will be in March 1984 when a further series of grants will be made for the second half of the year.

**Grants awarded at the panel meeting of the Foster's Sports Foundation on 12th October:**

British Weightlifting Championship  
(British Amateur Weightlifters Association)

£1,000

|                                                                                                  |        |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| British Sand-Yacht Championships<br>(Flyde International Sand Yacht Club)                        | £700   |
| The British Senior Freestyle Wrestling Championships<br>(British Amateur Wrestling Association)  | £1,000 |
| International Korfball Tournament<br>(The British Korfball Association)                          | £500   |
| Open Table Tennis Tournament<br>(Table Tennis Association of Wales)                              | £500   |
| The International Club Water-Polo Cup<br>(Richmond Water-Polo club/Amateur Swimming Association) | £750   |
| Kingston Regatta<br>(Kingston Rowing Club, Amateur Rowing Association)                           | £750   |
| International Hovercraft Championship<br>(Hoverclub of Great Britain Ltd)                        | £1,000 |
| Windermere Swimming Championships<br>(British Long Distance Swimming Association/ASA)            | £900   |
| British Open Championships 1984<br>(Modern Pentathlon Association of Great Britain)              | £1,000 |
| Home International Series<br>(Cycle Speedway Council)                                            | £750   |
| Mens Inter-Area Basketball Championships<br>(English Basketball Association)                     | £750   |
| Cumbria Cup<br>(British Amateur Rugby League Association)                                        | £1,000 |
| Clyde Rowing Weekend<br>(Clyde Amateur Rowing Club /SARA)                                        | £1,000 |
| National Rowing Championships of Great Britain<br>(Amateur Rowing Association)                   | £1,000 |
| National Grass Ski Championships<br>(British Grass Ski Congress/British Ski Federation)          | £650   |
| East of England Squash Championship<br>(Squash Rackets Association)                              | £1,000 |
| Ladies National Road Race League<br>(British Cycling Federation)                                 | £1,000 |
| RLSS Summer School 1984<br>(Royal Life Saving Society)                                           | £1,000 |
| Rink Hockey Championship<br>(Brighton Rink Hockey)                                               | £500   |

#### DURNGATE MILL NOVICE SLALOM — OCTOBER 8TH/9TH 1983

This was the first slalom to be run by Millbrook Canoe Club who took over from the Worthies just five weeks before. With help from the Winchester and District Canoe Club, Millbrook ran a good, friendly event. A fairly tight and technical course gave problems to the novices but there were few capsizes.

Half the course was demolished overnight by local 'skinheads' but with help from many paddlers it was all set to rights in time for the start of the Sunday Programme. The refreshment tent was one of the best ever selling everything from Pizzas to bread pudding!

L. Milam

## EVENTS

#### CANAL MARATHON FOR ALL CANOEISTS

The first organised Trans Pennine Canal Marathon takes place next year on the Leeds & Liverpool Canal, the longest single canal in Britain, starting from Leeds on Saturday, 26th May 1984, and finishing in Liverpool's Stanley Docks on Thursday, 31st May 1984. The strenuous route is 127-miles long and will involve over

DECEMBER 1983

30-portages of canoes around locks, passage through two tunnels, and climbing to and descending from a summit pound of 487ft above sea-level.

The event, the longest canoe race in the North of England, is being organised jointly by British Waterways Board and the Liverpool Watersports Centre who are looking for entries from experienced canoeists, youth groups and canoeists who will participate just for fun and experience of the event. Examples of some of the fast times previously recorded for the route are 30hrs 30mins in 1973 by a two-man team from Ormskirk, and 20hrs 40mins in 1982 by a team from Liverpool Fire Brigade with portage assistance.

All competitors will receive a prize in the form of a T-shirt and all those completing the course a certificate recording their achievement and, in addition, trophies will be awarded to the winners of the events outside the fun event. Also, a special Fire Brigade trophy will be awarded to the best-placed Fire Brigade Team.

For an application form and further details of the Canal Marathon, entrants should contact:

Gwen White, Liverpool Watersports Centre, Inner Temple, Temple Lane, Liverpool L2 5RS. Telephone: 051 227-3208. or Keith Wheal, Leisure Division, British Waterways Board, PO Box 9, 1 Dock Street, Leeds, LS1 1HH. Telephone: (0532) 436741.



#### COACH EDUCATION PROGRAMME ENTERS 2ND YEAR

The Sports Council (Southern Region) arranged an experimental coach education scheme in 1983 designed to attract coaches and sports leaders from a wide variety of sports and background.

The programme has proved to be an outstanding success with over 400 coaches attending 21 sessions during 1983.

As a consequence the Sports Council (Southern Region) has improved and extended the programme in 1984, and topics include, 'The Human Body and Fitness', 'Medical Aspects of Coaching and Failure to Perform', 'Testing the Athlete', 'Psychology and Skill', 'Looking after the Individual and Team' and 'Passing on Information'.

The extended programme of 28 two hour sessions will start in January 1984 at Bulmershe College of Higher Education in Reading, and each session costs £2.50.

For further information contact: The Sports Council (Southern Region), Watlington House, Watlington Street, Reading RG1 4RJ (Tel: Reading 595616).

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**LLANGOLLEN  
IMAGES**

# Mike Jones Weekend

by Steven Rudd

## THE LLANGOLLEN RUBBER RUN

The Mike Jones weekend was the cause of another interesting silly spectacular, hosted as always in Llangollen on the River Dee, flowing a lower level than usual for the time of year. The date this year falling on the 5th November.

Rubber seemed to be a lot more popular, being in its first anniversary year of this cold inflatable sport. Even so a lot more participation was apparent this year.

On the bridge stood droves of canoeists dressed in all assortments of 'posey' gear, wet and dry. Each in turn divided into small clusters, thrashing it out as to which was the best route through town; falls, or shall we go in the pub for a few jars?

The club vans from various clubs, polys and universities seem to be growing in strength, towing super size trailers. They could be found on every corner of every street and any spare piece of grass. The weekend looked as though it was set for a massive turn out. But I believe a few were side tracked to the Trywern due to the full water release.

A shout went up from the bustling crowd, nine deep on Town bridge, as a canoe paddled away. It had finally happened, Llangollen Bridge has now been seal launched. Good one Fosey, anyone interested in trying this feat you'll need a plastic boat and two strong pushers for the initial launch.

Two o'clock was the time for the ever inflating rubber race. The starters were still growing in numbers as the count down ticked away. The would-be competitors danced in a colourful balloon display, winding up into a frenzied state, tumbling downwards to the river and start line. Could these daring individuals have forgotten the water temperature? I wonder

All my assumptions were flattened from the word go. The 'aqualungs' leaped forth without thought and mind into a cut and thrust knockout rubber race, head long to tail rapids against the dock. Stroke after stroke the participants pounded the waves and rival crews in the climax of the race that soon wained into laughter and various states of floatation hanging on still smiling bobbing over the finish line.



# THE PERFECT RIVER

**M.F.Igoe finds the perfect river in Zimbabwe**



For many years I had stood on the bridge looking down stream where to deep clear pool disappeared into a long rapid to the right; but those were war years when even as you stood on the bridge you nervously watched the undergrowth and fingered your own weapon. Then the war ended and I obtained a Chinde, called a white water hull in Africa but really a cross between a touring and a slalom boat, and transported it 230-miles by truck to the bridge. I launched and five minutes later was in wonderland.

The first two rapids were grades I-II but the water later increased to III though it was the sum of the other conditions that made the river spectacular. The water was crystal clear and despite the tropical sun, ice cold. The banks were great granite boulders, sandy little beaches or lush green forest, where climbing vines, exotic birds and bright butterflies were reminiscent of chinese wallpaper.

I let the current take me racing over the orange stones of the riverbed, worked hard occasionally as the old hulk clawed at lumps of granite in the grade IIIs and watched spellbound as we drifted over flat silent parts with sandy bottom and forest trees a hundred feet high on either bank. These silent parts didn't come often though. A hundred yards was as much flat water as you would get at a time and that, I

think, is as much as any paddler would want. Indeed, I then decided I had found the perfect river.

Unfortunately it's a bit off the beaten track. The river is called the Pungwe and it rises among the Nyanga Mountains of the eastern province of Manicaland in the African Republic of Zimbabwe. This mountain province, once the ancient Kingdom of Manyika, forms a barrier between the Mocambique plain and the high Zimbabwean plateau, which used to be Rhodesia. For centuries the Manica Mountains blocked the gold producing states of the hinterland from the sea and the trade routes had to go either round or over them. The main one to go over followed the Pungwe westward from the old Arab port of Sofala, but my river at least, was not navigable and the trade goods must have wound up the green hills under the forest canopy on the heads of porters.

It's easy to think about history on the river because in 25-miles the only hints of modernity are a water pump, two road bridges, and a tea estate club whose lawn runs down to the water's edge. Apart from the odd fisherman or washerwoman there is no sign of human kind except occasional rope-bridges and bark-boats, until you come to the ruins of an 19th century Portuguese fort.

The Portuguese took over Sofala and the trade routes from the Arabs at the turn of the 15th century. In the 17th century they established a trading post on the Pungwe not far from where I paddled. They called the river Aruanguwa then; no one knows the site of the settlement, but no doubt it dominated the river.

Back in the 20th century, I leaped excitedly out of my Chinde and persuaded some of the members of Zimbabwe's tiny paddling fraternity to come and try the Pungwe which they did, pronouncing it the best in the land. It took a more experience paddler, Geoff Austin, to say it was not just that, but the best in the sub-continent. From my own European experience I might add, perhaps, in any. We decided to hold a race on it and scheduled it for the following year, East 1083.

There were problems of course. The river was isolated and since the sport was virtually unknown, sponsorship was impossible. On top of this the foreign press had reported Zimbabwe in such a way that a prospective visitor could be forgiven for expecting to be shot, which was quite unreasonable; when it came to it not even the starters pistol worked!

The river rises in a highland National Park and the youthful stretches of it are the preserve of trout fishermen. Then it falls into a spectacular gorge to emerge at the escarpment foot and flow through the country I have already described with its water still too cold and clear for hippo or crocodile. It is still pristine when it crosses the border into Mocambique (where a civil war makes it unwise to follow) so only about thirty miles are available for paddling. This is fine, though, for an L.D. When the great day came the ghosts of the Manica miners, Muslim traders, Portuguese explorers and British missionaries couldn't have seen a more exotic fleet gathered at the start.

It consisted of one K2, four KIs, a WW racer, 3 Chindes and our single foreigner — which made the event international — John Boyce from Nottingham in a Slalom C1. One of the KIs won and two came to grief in granite lined stoppers. There were about 30 gradeable rapids on a twenty mile course and a well stocked bar at the end. John Boyce wrote after the event: *'35 Kms is a long way but the river is such a pleasure it is not too far . . .'* even in a C1. When the euphoria of the race evaporated a thought struck me . . . The Pungwe is not the only river that rises in the Nyanga Mountains and flows off into the lowveld. I bought some more maps and began to study . . . this is where the story of the Gairesi begins



*Photographs show Mark Bolton, Geoff Austin, and John Boyce on the Pungwe River, and the Katiyo Canoe Club at the end of the River Descent.*

# DARE the wildest RIVER

## ANDREW EMBICK LOOKS AT THE TIEKEL RIVER

**TIEKEL RIVER** (from Stuart Creek to the Copper River).

**FIRST (and only) DESCENT:** Andrew Embick, John Markel and Chris Roach, May 20, 21, 23, 1983.

**DIFFICULTY:** VI—with technical drops of up to 20-feet with loaded boats, difficult scouting and a number of portages, several of which are difficult as well as strenuous; not recommended for rafts or, in fact, for any boaters except extremely strong parties of at least three kayakers with a high level of technical skill.

**GRADIENT:** Averages 47-feet per mile over a total distance of 17-miles; however, the first the last parts of the river are much less steep so that the middle section is probably closer to 100-feet per mile and one stretch drops at least 100-feet in about a half mile from a maximum gradient of 200+ feet per mile.

**TAKE-OUT:** At the confluence of the Tiekkel and the Copper seventy miles above the Flag Point bridge, Cordova, and 30 miles below Chitina. Either continue down the Copper (which could be very difficult because of the time of year—very early—the Tiekkel is runnable, flow in the Copper is also very low and Miles Lake is very likely still frozen), or hire Jon Breivogel (**Rivers Unlimited**, Copper Centre, 822-3535) to come down in his jet boat from Chitina to get you (for about \$300).

**FLOW:** Probably peaks some time in July or August at 15,000+ cfs. A multitude of small tributary streams all along the river cascade as waterfalls into it and steadily adds to its volume. An appropriate time for a run would be when the ice is just barely (or not quite) out of the Tsaina because further delay would likely result in rapid spring rises in flow. At a time in the fall when the river is low enough days are short and chilly. Optimum times for a run would be some time in April or May; early October

would also be possible, depending on the year. At the time of the first run estimated flow at the start was 1000 cfs (300 from the Upper Tiekkel and 700 from the Tsaina) and at the bottom, 4,000-5,000 cfs. A useful gage is a boulder just (about 10-12 feet) downstream of the "V-slot" at the Mile 37 bridge on the Tsaina. At the start it was about a foot to a foot-and-a-half out of the water and after the run, just barely above the surface.

**MAPS:** Valdez 1:250,000 and A-3,4; B-3,4; Cordova 1:250,000 shows the downstream section of the Copper.

**HISTORY:** Josephine Johnson and Leo Novitzke at Tsaina River Lodge relate how a survey party in rats tried the river and were turned back quickly, just barely able to hike through the rough terrain of the valley. The river was being surveyed for Copper River Highway from Cordova. Trappers penetrate into the upper and lower sections of river but the only party I now to have covered the entire length was Jim McMahon, Bob Peca and Judy Donaldson in March 1983. They took two days on skis and then skied up the Copper to Chitina in another three days. Locals have long known of the existence of several waterfalls somewhere in the course of the river and no attempts to kayak the river had been mounted until 1983. However, top boaters such as Rob Lesser from Idaho, and Alaskans Gary Galbraith, Barney Griffith and Steve Koslow had known of the river for several years. It remained, however, to get specific knowledge of the river and Andy Embick first flew the river in May, 1981, getting some aerial photographs but no good feel for either the scale of difficulties involved or the exact topography. Prodding by Rob Lesser resulted in another aerial scouting trip, in July, 1982, but high water made it obvious that the river was not even slightly reasonable to try in those conditions. Jon Breivogel in his twenty-two-foot Almar/Hamilton jet boat had ascended several miles up from the Copper on several

occasions up to a point where the canyon was getting narrow and turbulent, and one of his passengers, Dan Widmer of Valdez, took several photographs of the lower canyon. Jon was interested in the possibility of a complete up-run of the river and was actually quite disappointed when he saw the aerial photographs showing awesome falls and rapids.

Finally, after a Christmas 1982 ski trip a few miles down the canyon and back with Kathy Todd and a month of running rivers in Oregon and California in April and May as a warm-up, Embick tried to recruit a team. Mike Buck was too busy; Steve Jordan was out of action because of a knee injury sustained on Hell's Corner Gorge of the Klamath at 7,000 cfs; Bill Wise had to go to a wedding; Jim Lokken was on a canoe trip with his girlfriend and Rob Lesser would not be coming up until July. However, with typical seventeen-year-old enthusiasm, Chris Roach was not dissuaded by the potential difficulties and luckily, climber-kayaker John Markel agreed to come with only one day's notice. John had joined Rob Lesser and me last summer for the Susitna with a similar drop of a hat and added enormously to the strength of the team both then and now.

We rendezvoused at Tsaina Lodge, John coming from Girdwood and picking up Chris and his boat in Anchorage. I saw my last patient on Friday afternoon, then started driving from Valdez at 5pm. Changing, packing and distributing group gear delayed us a little. (There was actually some last-minute debate as to the advisability of the trip, John noticing how snowy and bleak the early spring landscape was.) As it turned out, down in the canyon we were protected from wind, the altitude was steadily reduced and we were fairly comfortable with a mixture of overcast, sun and occasional fine drizzle.

Starting at 8 pm we floated leisurely down the riffles and between the gravel bars of the upper river soon joining the Tiekkel. Before the Tsaina joined it was too shallow (as well as having too many logs across) to run. As the light faded the river steadily became more interesting and cut through some low rock benches. Trees and smaller driftwood from the July 1981 flood were high and dry twenty feet above our water level. In about a half hour, before we were really accustomed to our loaded boats, we encountered a short canyon section which though undercut, narrow and making a 90° turn to the right had only mild swirls and otherwise flowed calmly between gray bedrock walls. The leaden grey sky, grey unknown river and grey rock walls combined to make the river, at least at this point, much more intimidating than justified by its pure technical difficulties.

After the first small canyon the river widened again for another half mile but another canyon obviously started just beyond. We got out of the boats to scout, but were happily surprised to find only class III difficulties visible at worst down to past a gentle left turn (we were up on a small bluff on the left) so we got back in, eddy hopping down for another half mile. The river was only 25-30 feet wide but richly endowed with eddies so that we only got out finally when we could see the canyon obviously narrowing and the walls getting steeper culminating with an abrupt right turn. We stopped to camp at 10 pm on a sandy bench on the left just above the river. The scene itself was peaceful except for a few mosquitoes, though our residual edginess at the thought of the problems ahead gave the trip an aura very different

from that of an ordinary river camping trip.

In the morning John and I spent a couple of relaxed hours hiking down to scout and in the next half-mile found only class III-IV difficulties until an abvious talus slope came into view on the left. At that point there was a river-wide drop of several feet, undoubtedly runnable, but we chose not to because after the drop and then a small pool was a horrifyingly boulder-obstructed mess we definitely would have to portage. That task took much of the day.

Starting at 10 am it only took a few minutes to run what had taken two hours to scout, and we pulled out on the left, briefly carried, put in again and ran only about twenty yards before pulling out again on the left, just above where the talus started. Confronted with a major portage so close to the start of the trip was not encouraging and we spent quite a bit of time not actually getting moving but rather sort of hesitantly committing ourselves. Our team work, I must admit, also needed some practice to perfect, so while we spent a half day on the obstacle it would have gone much faster had we encountered it later in the trip. This portage is not really clear in my (selective) memory but I do recollect a sort of Tyrolean rope traverse of one boat which didn't work well so that we ended up scrabbling with the other two across slimy rock slabs and unstable dirt, holding on to tiny, half dead bushes for dear life. At one point we got most of our rope pinned underwater but some ingenious tactics got it free.

From that point we went only a few feet, eddied out on the right and scrambled up the mossy canyon wall. There were fresh bear tracks (as there had been the previous night) and we hiked down a couple of hundred yards past a succession of closely-spaced, single drops. The next to last was much worse and would clearly involve some radical moves around rocks and holes. The last drop was obviously the worst, as a dam of boulders filled most of the river on the right, water flowing through and under the boulders. The entry on the left, however, was blocked above. It looked "not too bad" to me but there was, at this time, a great contrast between my attitude and John's. I somewhat inanely insisted it would be "class IV", no problem" and wanted to just go back to the boats and flash it. John just as strongly thought the river was nasty and very big. After a lot of looking and analyzing from above, we headed back to the boats planning to eddy-hop down carefully and get out at every opportunity for a closer look.

That's the way it turned out. I went first running the first class IV drops non-stop and the next one, a snaking class V that had me going right-left-right to miss some very large holes, as soon as they joined me in the eddy above it. John and Chris got out to scout it (interminably standing there, I thought, as I waved directions and useless, urgent signals) then crossed over left and carried part of it. In retrospect, I should have waited so that they could have watched my run if only to take pictures. But I do perform better, I think, when coming at a drop without stopping, as my reflexes and timing are at maximal readiness. I did wait for them to get out before running the dam, but by this time it seemed that the pace of the trip had subtly altered. They might end up portaging and we would often need to scout, but now there was a feeling of urgency. We would no longer spend much time just standing, looking and reflecting, but rather just quickly get out, check out

the situation and without delay do whatever was required.

I jumped in my boat (which by this time was balanced weight-wise by moving my foot pedals up three notches and tightening the hip belt correspondingly) and without any particular concern made a far-right tongue entry and violently threw myself left, banking high on a boulder and then just as violently stroked to avoid getting thrown against the left wall of the narrow, steep chute. John and Chris, watching, decided I was nuts, in part, because they weren't sure of the run-out below. It was almost the only section I remembered from my aerial scouting of two years before, a straight, quarter-mile-long, extremely narrow (12-15 feet) section where the river cut a deep slot and almost went out of sight. Of course no stopping was possible but it was unobstructed and not difficult, though very fast. A beautifully inviting eddy with a gravel beach then beckoned on the left and I pulled out, excited, happy and content.

Both my impatience and John's hesitation had moderated and it seemed that we were making good progress, meeting the river on its own terms and doing well. Part of what contributed to that feeling was looking down-canyon and seeing a peak which looked pretty close and which we wrongly assumed was across the Copper from our take-out. In actuality, we were much less than half-way, but faced with a narrow canyon down-stream and fading light we decided to knock off. (It was almost 8 pm by the time John and Chris completed their portage of the dam and ran the narrow section.) I had spent the last hour being warm and relaxed by a driftwood fire and figured we could get up and going early Sunday morning.

Light rain at about 5.30 am woke me up and hastened in getting my sleeping gear and clothes quickly put away, and wet suit on. John and Chris were easily roused and in contrast to the previous day, we really had our act together and were on the river in not much over a half hour. We floated into a canyon, (I think a section I ran on the right and the others carried on the left was here) but to our surprise and pleasure despite being very narrow and twisting was cut through exquisitely sculpted and polished grey rock.

It was moderate and runnable for miles, scouting only from eddies. The river would ominously go out of sight around a corner and we would eddy hop down and lo! There would be another fifty yards of enjoyable class III-IV. Only once did we briefly portage on the right around a tooth-like boulder blocking up the river. Then more narrow canyon, gradually widening and moderating. By this point we knew we were making tremendous progress and though we didn't really know where we were, we were obviously getting a lot closer to the Copper. The floating we were doing was not strenuous, and a fine drizzle was making my hands cold.

At about 9 am I was almost happy to come to another horizon line between canyon walls with only spray visible beyond and the usual dull roar emanating from below. This one turned out to be runnable, however, especially since we'd changed as a team from being easily intimidated to being almost casual. Chris, I think, was getting cold and a bit tired briefly mentioning that he felt thrashed, but getting some food into him helped, and Chris worn out still has more energy than most people rested. He had the best run of any of us in that rapid which culminated in

about a five or six foot drop-off after banking left off a big central boulder - from a right entry.

When the river continued to widen and moderate I even allowed myself the thought that maybe we were done with the difficulties. We had (I had) grossly misjudged our progress, however, and still ahead was a section where hundred-foot contour lines were only a half-inch apart on the map. It was not indicated as being a deep or steep-walled canyon (lucky for us) and was very obvious as we approached. The river just disappeared downward out of sight among boulders, an obvious signal to get out.

Scouting along boulders, loose, freshly fallen talus and a few remnants of rotten snow on the left revealed a probably runnable, boulder-studded, very steep section of eighty yards culminating in a twenty-five to thirty foot waterfall. The latter was marked by a house-sized (forty-foot) boulder on the left and looking downstream from atop it the river continued its two-hundred plus foot per mile drop for another three hundred yards culminating in a poorly visible, but nevertheless lethally ominous thirty-foot falls through jumbled boulders! The river was quite straight in this section and each violent, single drop was probably runnable by itself (usually via a left-hand chute) but the close spacing of drops, the cold grey water, the lethal-looking waterfall below (and for all we knew, another mile of the same below that) made running totally out of the question. We were in a canyon with essentially no chance of rescue for days, and the consequences of an accident were very unpleasant to contemplate.

We didn't run the four or five hundred yards and I took my paddle apart, stuffed it into the boat and put the spray skirt on, tying it shut with some string. We each had a twenty-five foot length of 3/16" web with a carabiner on the end, compact enough to stuff in a pocket, but long enough to drag boats with, pull them up one side of a boulder and lower them down the other side, and line the boats along the shore. We did all those things, usually each person handling his boat alone but often assisting with tough sections or hangups as well. Several times in the course of the three or four hours we left the gear and went on ahead but needn't have bothered as the verdict continued to be the same: thumbs down.

First we were over and down boulders, then adopted a novel technique and tied onto each boat a full hundred feet of rope perching the boat somewhere above the river, then scrambling down along the bank

## TIEKEL RIVER

# DARE the wildest RIVER

or traversing across a cliffside while feeding the rope out. At a secure spot we'd pull, the boat would fall into the water and we'd quickly reel in as it rushed and bumped toward us. Then we'd haul it up and find a perch for it again, then repeat. Chris took a little while to get used to this idea but John helped by throwing his boat off the cliff when things seemed to be lagging. Thank God for plastic boats!

All good things come to end, this one just a few feet below the second waterfall when the river looked runnable again. A good thing, because the walls closed in and along-the-bank travel was out. Getting started I almost slid off my boulder with skirt off and paddle still stashed on a rock, but stopped myself and did better the second time.

The start required a fast peel out to the far right of the river in a boat that now felt even heavier now that my arms were tired. We knew we were getting close and only stopped once more for a brief carry of a rapid without much vertical but several hard-to-miss holes and to scout the next little bit.

The river steadily widened and moderated and a big recognizable waterfall came in from the right and we could see the dust of the Copper River's famous abiotic winds below. Sweeping turns, one after the other, and gentle ripples made it obvious that we were finally through almost on schedule. Coming around the last turn Jon Breivogel's boat was visible on the right just tying up. Happy days! We got the boats in the back, got the boat pushed off the gravel it was stuck on, started the engine, turned on the heater, changed into our dry clothes and finished off some of our extra food. John and I agreed that we could easily have kept going for another day or two if need be; we had plenty of food and weren't really very thrashed at all. The quick (an hour and a half) ride up to Chitina made the transition to the civilized world almost too quickly. By 8 pm we were on the Richardson Highway at the Edgerton Cut-off trying to hitch back to our cars...

## NEW BOOKS GUIDES AND PUBLICATIONS

### BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK

The National Park Service has published a new handbook on the Big Bend National Park in west Texas.

Big Bend gains its name from the sweeping curve of the Rio Grande that embraces this 3/4-million-acre park by the Mexican border, more than 300 miles southeast of El Paso. The new book sets forth both the natural and human history of this remote, rugged region.

This 128-page handbook is divided into three sections: Part 1 gives a brief introduction to the Park and its history; Part 2 examines the area's natural history; and Part 3 presents concise travel and reference material.

Writer Helen Moss' portrayal of the area's natural history incorporates discussion of ancient fossils and description of the principal facets of the present park's three major natural systems: Chihuahuan Desert, temperate mountain heights, and the great river.

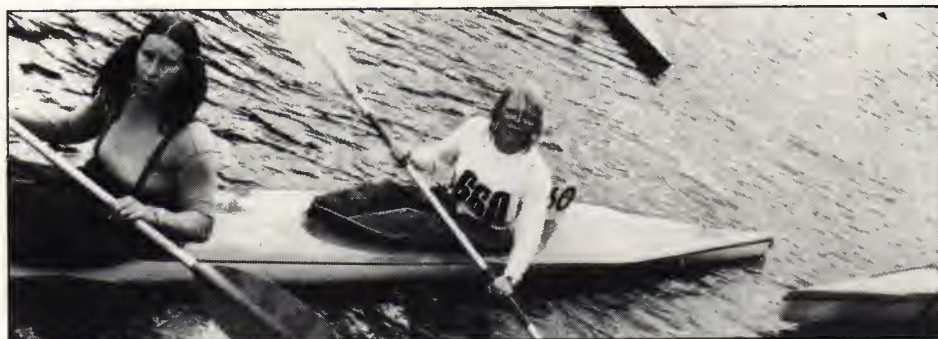
History is recounted from the days of nomadic hunters, Spanish explorers, and the Apaches and Comanches to the arrival of mining, ranching, fur trapping, smuggling, and finally, the park's creation in 1944.

The book is well illustrated with a selection of full-colour photographs that thoroughly dispel the myth of lifelessness in the desert. Included are pictures by such distinguished photographers as David Muench and Ed Cooper, as well as 19th-century material. They offer historical views, modern wildlife portraits and spectacular scenic photography.

Descriptions of the park's facilities, services, and recreational opportunities are included in the section, 'Guide and Adviser'. A full-colour park map, addresses and telephone numbers, handy travel information, and a guide to further reading, also are included. Safety tips provide special warnings about desert hazards — from cactus spines to flash floods — and hints for successful backpacking and river-running expeditions.

**Big Bend** is number 119 in the National Park Service's popular handbook series.

**Big Bend** may be purchased from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 USA for \$6.50. The stock number is 024-005-00836-5.



Anne and Wendy on the Gudena Marathon.

## EVENTS

### DEVIZES TO WESTMINSTER International Canoe Race 1984



For Rule Books, Entry Forms etc. please apply to:-  
DW Keane, 12, Swakeleys Drive  
Uxbridge, Middx. UB10 8QB

### REGIONAL INDOOR SLALOM HEATS FOR 1984 CANOE EXHIBITION

#### Venues, Dates and Organisers

|                      |                                                   |                |                                                                            |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| York & Humberside    | Halifax Swimming Pool<br>Skircoate Road, Halifax  | Jan 21<br>1830 | Norah Small,<br>3 Manor Close,<br>Bramhope, Leeds. Yorks                   |
| North West           | Castle Leisure Centre,<br>Bury, Lancs             | Nov 27<br>1530 | John Meadowcraft,<br>91 Bromwich Street,<br>Bolton, Lancs                  |
| London & S.E. & East | Riverside Baths, Erith.<br>(Down by river)        | Jan 15<br>1300 | Paul Wallett,<br>72 Sandrock Road,<br>London SE13                          |
| Southern             | Central Pool,<br>Bedford Road, Reading            | Jan 7<br>1830  | Martin Stetchel,<br>41 Wyndham Crescent,<br>Woodley, Reading,<br>Bucks     |
| West Midlands        | Stratford upon Avon,<br>Swimming Pool             | Jan 14<br>1830 | Tony Arrowsmith,<br>34 Newbold Road,<br>Wellesbourne,<br>Warwickshire      |
| South West           | Fillwood Baths,<br>Fillwood Broadway, Bristol     | Dec 17<br>1800 | Tony Cox,<br>Windrush, Stanshall<br>Lane, Felton, Nr Bristol               |
| East Midlands        | Sherwood Swimming Pool<br>(Off the A60) Mansfield | Jan 21<br>1800 | Chris Martin,<br>17 Lawnsdale, Spondon,<br>Derby                           |
| Northern             | Montague Baths<br>Newcastle upon Tyne             | Dec 27<br>1700 | Steve Agar,<br>60 Ancrum Street,<br>Spital Tongues,<br>Newcastle upon Tyne |

## British Schools Canoeing Association

# WYE CANOE FESTIVAL

Heavy rain during the week brought a high river, possibly too high for the event. However a dry Friday and a clear moonlight night preceded a beautiful misty morning and a windless sunny day. The river dropped to a fast reasonable flow, with ideal canoeing conditions for the first day of the BSCA Wye Canoeing Festival. Some 300 canoeists assembled at PGL canoe base, Court Farm, pupils, staff and volunteer helpers from the BCU coaching scheme.

Of the two competitive events, the Circular Relay held on a short course in the Wye horseshoe at Ross on Wye was designed for close supervision of relative beginners. Each team of six used one K2 for a four hour stint, and once the skills were mastered some enthusiastic paddling brought fun to the spectators on the bank, and enlivened action to the teams. The winning teams completed the most laps in the four hours, and in each class the final totals were within a lap!

### Circular Relay Results

|        |    |                                   |
|--------|----|-----------------------------------|
| Girls  | 1  | Fulham Cross                      |
|        | 2  | Southfield                        |
| Junior | 1  | Writhlington, Bath (35 laps)      |
|        | 2  | William Temple, Preston (35 laps) |
|        | 3  | Hitchin Boys                      |
| Senior | 11 | North Warwickshire (31 laps)      |
|        | 2  | Haywards Heath (30 laps)          |

In the Down River Relay, from Hole in the Wall to Monmouth, teams of six used a K1, the paddlers changing places at pre-arranged check points. River conditions were ideal, and during the 25 mile course several close battles emerged. In the straight run into Monmouth the senior teams of Haywards Heath and St. Josephs. Tredegar were neck and neck, while the Junior teams of Oldwallis and Writhlington were close.

### Down River Relay Results

**Juniors:** 1. Oldwallis CC, J4, 3hrs 24 mins; 2. Writhlington School CC, J18, 3hrs 30mins; 3. William Temple School, J11, 3hrs 41mins; 4. 18 Purley Scouts, J16, 3hrs 55mins; 5. Archbishop William 'B', J20, 3hrs 58mins; 6. Dean Row, Wilmslow, J15, 4hrs 22mins; 7. Archbishop William 'A', J19, 4hrs 27mins; 8. King Edward/Q. Mary, Lytham, J12, 4hrs 44mins; 9/10. Hitchin Boys School, J14, 6hrs 04mins.

**Seniors:** 1. Haywards Heath, S7, 3hrs 35mins; 2. St. Josephs, S2, 3hrs 36mins; 3. Edgbarrows, Crowthorne, S4, 3hrs 48mins; 4. Maidenhead, S6, 3hrs 49mins; 5. Carleton Le Willows 'B', S9, 3hrs 50mins; 6. Carleton Le Willows 'A', S3, 3hrs 51mins; 7. King Edwards, S1, 3hrs 52mins; 8. N. Warwickshire Tech, S8, 4hrs 11mins.

**Girls:** 1. Oldwallis CC, G4, 3hrs 41mins; 2. Fulham Cross, G1, 4hrs 49mins; 3. Newstead Wood, G3, 4hrs 41mins.

A total of 30 teams from 18 different groups enjoyed a superb day with challenging fun. Another three school parties toured down river, Burclose Grange, Edgbarrow and Sir Winston Churchill School for the Deaf.

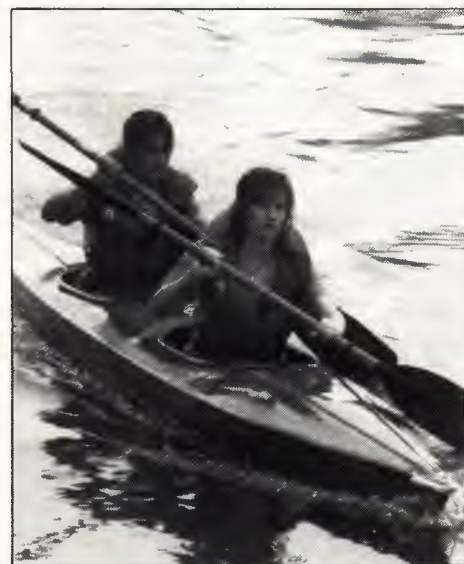


A crowded evening presentation, made by Geoff Good, BSCA Chairman and BCU coaching officer, and introduced by Glen Greer, the Managing Director of PGL Young Adventure, was followed by a talk and film of Everest and K2 canoeing expeditions by Rob Hastings. The long day concluded with a reception given by PGL Young Adventure for the volunteer helpers and staff.

The Sunday brought similar conditions, and a mass tour from Lydbrook to Monmouth — a canoe run togetherness!

The PGL sponsorship proved a great success, and everyone who enjoyed the weekend owes them appreciation. So too the large number of BCU coaching scheme volunteers who gave up their weekend to help staff the events for the enjoyment of the others. Within the PGL staff thanks must go to Liz Lloyd, Dave Shell and the well known Rosemary Hayes — but with a warning to Glen Greer — we'll be back again next year if you'll have us. Thanks to all for a memorable weekend.

Brian Horn  
North West Centre of Excellence



# MARATHON RACING

## GENTLE EXE

**LACK OF RAIN GIVES 'BUMP & SCRAPE' RACE CONDITIONS FOR SECOND TIME IN TWELVE YEARS**

The Exe Descent, sponsored by Strand Glassfibre and organised by the Exeter Canoe Club, was held on Sunday 20th November. The event — as usual — attracted a tremendous entry with a total of some 590 individual or crew entries. The Senior Touring and White Water Class was a fantastic 242 boats!

In past years this race has gained a reputation for fast and exciting water, good rapids on the top sections and massive weirs to be shot on the lower sections. But the water is not controlled in any way and relies on the fickle weather of our country. Even so, it seems always that the Exe turns up trumps, the rains come and the river flows wild and free . . . after weeks of fine weather the river has come up literally overnight to produce the spectacular conditions that has spread its fame as a boat-breaker. Alas, this year the rains failed and the river was a mere trickle — a real 'bump and scrape' almost all the way.

Some of the London based paddlers had telephoned canoeists in the Exeter area during the week prior for information on the water state and in the event had decided the water was too low to make the long trip to the West Country worthwhile. Super wild water is one thing, but a twenty mile drag was definitely not for them.

The Sunday morning was bright and cold . . . the river failing to make a last minute rise in level. Thus the Exe Descent for 1983 is only news-worthy for the lack of water. The sub-aqua boys had little to do, although even the minute stoppers below some of the weirs did catch the odd paddler . . . while on many of the weir faces and chutes could be seen another danger in the shape of stakes, the odd iron projection and more than a few rocks. One paddler, taking the chute of Thorverton Weir raced into the standing wave only to come to a dead stop — a below surface rock almost took the whole bow off! The famous Cowley Steps of past years was not worth the watching, but the last weir on the course did give the many spectators just a glimpse of what the Exe Descent can be in high water. With enough depth to shoot here, more than a few paddlers came to grief in the stopper below the weir . . . a few broken boats, the odd 'submarine', and some 'interesting' capsizes! The old mill has disappeared now and in its place a very picturesque public house with river frontage giving good

access to the weir face from the Exeter side. Certainly in future high water years this weir should produce some of the best and most spectacular of photographs.

In the Senior K2, Paul and Mick Wells of the Richmond Canoe Club took the win with a time of 2hrs 26mins 14sec. However, at Thorverton, it was Hignett/Shillingford of Reading and Leighton Park who were out in front, the Richmond crew chasing hard and with the Wolverhampton pair of Gollings/Fletcher in third. By the finish the Richmond boys had pulled through to take the win, the Leighton Park pair dropped to second, while pulling up to third were a second Leighton Park Crew, that of Perrett/Smith.

In the Senior K1 it was Robin Belcher under Mercia colours who took the win from Rod Kinch — again of Reading and Leighton Park. Rosling of Bradford-on-Avon gained the third place.

**SENIOR MEN K2: 1st P. Wells/M. Wells, Richmond Canoe Club, 2hr 26min 14 sec; 2nd P. Wolfe/M Banks, Salmon Leap (Ireland), 2hr 27min 03 sec; 3rd P. Hignett/N. Shillingford, Reading & Leighton Park, 2hr 30min 06sec; 4th S. Perrett/K. Smith, Reading & Leighton Park, 2hr 35min 22sec; 5th M. Gollings/R. Fletcher, Wolverhampton, 2hr 36min 26sec; 6th B. Perrett/J. Raciborski, Reading & Leighton Park, 2hr 38min 41sec; 7th G. Rowell/P. Ralph, Reading & Leighton Park, 2hr 50min 58 sec; 8th A. Langdon/P. O'Malley, Falcon Canoe Club, 2hr 52min 56sec; 9th Taylor/Wibrew, Gillingham Canoe Club, 2hr 59min 19sec; 10th R. Ward/C. Belcher, Mercia Canoe Club, 3hr 02min 48sec.**

**SENIOR MEN K1: 1st R. Belcher, Mercia Canoe Club, 2hr 21min 32sec; 2nd R. Kinch, Reading & Leighton Park, 2hr 23min 39sec; 3rd J. Rosling, Bradford-on-Avon Canoe Club, 2hr 26min 16sec; A. Bennett, Havering Racing Squad, 2hr 28min 12sec; 5th A. Dawson, Mercia Canoe Club (Junior), 2hr 32min 57sec; 6th S. Missen, Bradford-on-Avon, 2hr 33min 22sec; 7th C. Finnegan, Kilcullen Canoe Club (Ireland: Junior), 2hr 34min 24sec; 8th P. Lancaster, Reading & Leighton Park, 2hr 35min 27sec; 9th J. Day, Bradford-on-Avon, 2hr 35min 34sec; 10th K. Coleman, Tonbridge Canoe Club, 2hr 35min 54sec.**

*Photographs by Mike Clark of a very dry looking Exe Descent. Shots from below the start, Thorverton, and the last weir into Exeter.*





# SEA CANOEING

# BARRA AND THE UISTS

## A July sea tour to the Uists

### Preparation for the Trip

Outside the window 'the sound' is grey and a fresh southerly is blowing mustering whitecaps here and there. Its' amazing what being laid up with an infected knee does for one's writing urges. I'm not allowed to walk, cycle, canoe or go to work, so I'm contenting myself with armchair paddling. It's about time there were more sea canoeing articles in this magazine, so here's my tuppence worth on our July 83's venture!

As neither of us had a car we had managed just nearly to organise getting our canoes from Iona and Edinburgh to Oban and complete all the planning and food buying inside about a month. At long last we were aboard the Claymore outward bound for the Hebrides. I had packed my canoe on the railway pier and Ingrid hers aboard the steamer! Our plan was to try and get round all the Outer Hebrides, south of the Sound of Harris, in a week. However we had various contingency plans laid with cop out points along the way, e.g., the sounds between Benbecula and the Uists, the option of dumping the north or south sections of the trip, the option of crossing to the opposite leeward coast in the event of a prolonged easterly or westerly blow, and finally two possible finishing points. In the event we had to utilise only our final option and terminated the trip at Lochboisdale. We had amazingly calm weather although occasionally too hot! (Some folk are never happy.)

### Mingulay Arch

Our first day saw us paddle in calm conditions south from Vattersay round Barra Head and back up to Sandray (in a sort of figure of eight to work the tides off Barra Head). One of the most memorable moments was on the west coast of Mingulay.

We discussed looking at the maps strapped on deck in front of us, where the channel went in. It looked narrow. We nosed forward into this gorge of the sea, the swell echoes behind us guarding the entrance. Steep walls of rock on either side cut out the sun's hot bright glare and we blinked as we silently glided forward. As we went further in we could see a brightly lit opening and the remnants of the swell rolling in from our right. We had reached

the channel on the south side of Arnamul. But ahead I could see at the foot of the 200ft. walls of sheer rock, was a hole leading further in. An arch by definition, at first my eyes couldn't read the light and dark ahead. Above the arch was a massive wall of rock, below was another narrow sea channel leading on towards another gloomy widening.

I paddled over curiously, passing through the bright channel leading off to my right to the westerly swell, and entered the gloom again. I looked upwards, I could see daylight but it was so steep I almost fell out of my canoe as I tried to look upwards over my head as my canoe slipped quietly forwards. Ingrid was framed behind when I turned to look, in the massive tunnel of rock. Then I entered the second chamber and turned 'Solan's' nose out into the gentle westerly swell and edged out, back to the sunshine and the blue sea and sky.

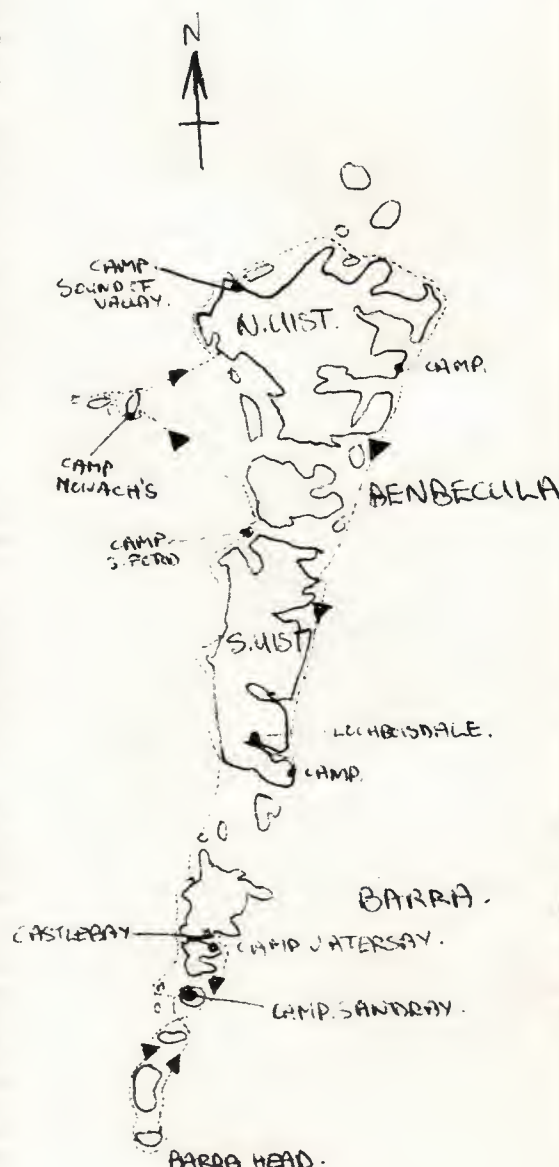
### 12-Hour Paddle

Our second day was our longest, we left Sandray at the back of 9.00am, and paddled the entire length of Barra, across the sound of South Uist to grind to a halt in South Ford just short of midnight.

We had already paddled a long way. Bad visibility had led us to some incorrect conclusions on the featureless coast. So when we found the tide heading South against us over the shallows and that we were in fact 11km not 8kms from our next planned break we gradually became worn down.

Eventually the tide started going with us, which to my calculations was at variance with the Pilot's predictions. I had declared I was ready for a 'pee' stop so we landed through tiny surf at Bun-na-Feathlach. The filthy river birlled out its narrow channel of sand and decaying sea-weed to meet us and we clambered out onto its semi-quicksand banks. Then we hauled the canoes bows up a few feet. While we ate some chocolate a solitary bloke with what looked like a beachcasting rod came down to chat briefly. It turned out to be a portable C.B. rig, he'd been following our progress up the coast on his radio! His pals further south were keeping him informed. He enthusiastically reported our arrival and having worked our plans out of us reported our intentions.

We were a little over half way up the



coast of South Uist. It was a long coast of endless stand. In poor weather and in any kind of real movement from the West in the sea, a surf coast for 30km and few enough landing spots. For this reason we were keen to knock it off and not stop the night on the edge of the Sand in case over-night a heavy swell got up, and prevented us leaving. There was another reason for our keenness, however. During working hours two sections of the coast are Army firing grounds, patrolled by high speed 'range safety' launches and plastered by shells of doubtful vintage inbetween.

It was a Sunday evening and we were going through, (before the Monday morning bangs began!). I launched Ingrid into the rivers current, she twirled away downstream. After a few sandy heaves I followed, canting into the flow. We both stuck briefly on the bar as our boats lifted to the tiny waves. We were on the last leg now. My tiredness returned quickly after our break and I watched Ingrid still powering on. I dipped my arms deep, letting water run down my forearms to cool them, my arms felt heavy, my paddle like a treetrunk and the slim kayak like a leadfilled barge. The sun sank into the horizon. The mist abetted the darkness, veil-like the mark closed in. We carried on in a steady rhythm. By some minor twist of fate both our footrests had become messed up on this last leg. Ingrid's had swung out leaving her pushing on her bags in the bow. My shoes in a stuffsack had worked loose and form their place behind the footrest had fallen in front of it, leaving my right leg unusually cramped.

In darkness we groped our way round Ardivachar Point, then crawled along by the shore, feeling for landmarks. We had just started parallel to the spit that extends from the South Uist side of South Ford when Ingrid announced she felt a bit odd. Well to me it was almost a relief, I was no longer the only tired canoeist in the party! Some people deteriorate gradually, some can go on and on, but eventually we all get tired. So we decided to head in then and there, wherever we were. Abandoning the idea of continuing to the entrance to South Ford, we landed in tiny waves. A long, long beach lay ahead to the high water mark. We dropped Ingrid's Umnak twice on the sandflats, I carried it the last stretch on my shoulder while Ingrid balanced the stern. Then we unloaded my brutes contents into Ingrid's rucksack and my two fold up kitbags. Nothing on earth could've got us to carry my loaded boat that distance. We practically crawled over the sand dunes and threw the tents up in half sheep-path, half Marrain grass. Sand got into everything but we were past caring. After 12 hours paddling and 64km, we were little short of knackered. Ingrid crashed out straight away, I made myself a comforting brew of tea and shortbread then hit the sack.

#### Sortie to the Misty Isles

After this marathon we had a lighter trip next day (after a crippling carry to re-launch). We had long decided that we would attempt to go out to the Monach

Islands, to the west of North Uist. This group lies out in the Atlantic and nobody lives there now. Once, like St. Kilda, it was inhabited by hardy folk but gradually it became so depopulated that there was no longer enough men to cover the work. It was abandoned after the 2nd World War. Nowadays in the summer some fishermen stay in the few remaining roofed houses using the islands as a fishing base. While we were out there three forrad wheelhouse lobster prawn boats were moored in the two anchorages and an open launch was working off the reefs to the south.

However, when we were within striking distance of the islands, visibility had faded in the heat haze to about 3km. In the calm weather our 13km open crossing from Benbecula was never an anxious one. We picked up the reef of Bo Ruag to our left and raised Ceann Ear earlier than we'd hoped in the mist, we came in almost bang on target, a matter of less than 2/3 km to the north of our destination Port Raudh. We met an ex-resident of the island, over as a guide with an interested visitor, and one of the fishermen, but otherwise we had the islands to ourselves, along with the terns, puffins, shearwaters and grey howling seals at night.

We explored the islands in drizzle the next day with a fresh Northerly breeze throwing up a chop on the windwards side of the island chain. Navigating our way about the islands in less than 1km visibility in the morning gave us adequate time to tighten up our compass and mapwork for the crossing to North Uist in the afternoon. We found Shillay alright. Standing lonesome in the mist is the tall finger of a disused lighthouse. A huge, high tower of red brick with a two story block of flat roofed buildings for keeper and family accommodation at its foot. Every door and window had a shutter of galvanised steel closing the opening, they were numbered and had presumably been custom made ashore to fit exactly when they closed the place down. This is typical of the lighthouse board, everything is well built and well maintained. There was a walled off meadow, stone pavements, paths and steps. One room houses rows of boilers, another a coal store, and there was a row of outside loos round a flagstoned courtyard. Inside there were fireplaces in most rooms, hardwood window frames, still intact, and plastered walls, in fact everything one would expect in a posh city flat.

After a while we got chilly exploring and went back to the canoes, now high and dry. We floated and carried them to the edge of the sea and set off again on compass into the murk.

We set off across the Sound of Monach after toggging up for the next journey ahead, and figuring out a heading. Stockay disappeared into the gloom astern and we plunged into the chop kicked up by a Northerly force 4. In no time at all we were soaked through, our heavy boats picking up gushing deckloads of water which slowly found its way into the stitching of our layers and layers of nylon, seeping finally out into our cockpit apartments. My

eyes were stinging and red, and my lips, fleeced by the sun in the previous two days were now thoroughly mangled by the wind, rain and salt. About 3km before we reached North Uist we could see land ahead, and the white beaches stretching out. We enjoyed our lunch, in a brief sunny interval, with a hot cup of tea, bladder relieved and boats sponged dry on the beach. After climbing a sand dune I was able to confirm our position, we found overall on the trip our navigation was best when we couldn't see past the end of our kayaks!

#### Heading South

Two days of paddling took us through the sunny Sound of Harris, where we despatched our trip postcards, and had wind and tide against us. Then turned 'right' and down the east coast of the islands, whose west coast we'd just come up! We found the east coast more rocky and hillier close to the shore, more interesting as a backdrop. The wind was mostly on the beam and offshore, not my favourite. The east coast hasn't many night landings, just enough if you look ahead on the map. We had an unspoken policy of avoiding most of the centres of civilisation, which anyway all seemed to demand extra miles in and out of long sea lochs. Our navigation really went to pieces on the 2nd last day when mazes of little islands and channels and good visibility (we could see sky) left us totally confused to our exact position several times. We paddled 29km in four and three quarter hours (to my exhaustion) in a crosswind. After our large lunch we slipped into a huge double caverned cave below Usinish lighthouse, unfortunately my instamatic wasn't quite up to the job. That day was another 50km day.

We were pipped at the post on our last day and deemed it wise to paddle 7km rather than 33km in unsettled and fresh conditions, rather than risk a change for the worse and miss the steamer, the last one till Monday, 2 days later. Such is life when held to the commitments of working and holidays. So we finished at Lochboisdale rather than actually return to Castlebay.

I used a Nordkapp HM, Ingrid used an Umnak. Against all popular beliefs and opinions, we both reckon the Umnak is a better kayak in many aspects. It's certainly faster (!yes), will carry just as much if not more gear (with adequate freeboard), as most sea-kayaks, is manoeuvrable and runs well in big following seas in a way few other boats can. In all we reckoned I had to work harder than Ingrid. All praise to an underrated kayak. (And we did try out each others boats!). We used Lendal paddles, Chevron buoyancy aids, Vango tents, Trangia stores. We carried all our food aboard, only replenishing water en route. We kept deck gear to an absolute minimum and worked from O.S. maps and a large chart with homework from the West Coast Pilot, Clyde Cruising Club directions, and Reeds. We used simple Silva compasses which more than adequately coped for what we encountered. The total distance was about 259km in 6½ days.

# ACE PERCEPTION dancer

THE LATEST ADDITION  
TO THE WORLD'S  
BEST RANGE OF  
KAYAKS

Comfortable moulded seat  
Large cockpit  
for easy entry and exit

Comfortable moulded  
kneebraces

Buoyant, solid foam centre  
bracings, for added  
rigidity and safety

Fully adjustable  
Yakima footrests

Generous  
toe-room

Rounded ends  
for extra safety

Grab loops —  
6mm to  
BSI/BCMA  
standards

Unique modified

Conforms to B.S.I./B.S.M.A.  
Standard 91 where applicable



dancer

dancer

Low rear deck  
for ease of roll

One-piece gyroflow  
hull and deck

and it's to

The end product  
development and  
'Dancer' is rotomoulded in one  
unique Gyroflow process, pioneered in the  
virtually indestructible polyethylene,  
already famous Perception 'H' seams, no  
leakage. The 'Dancer' manufacture  
the technology and expertise of the market

Already  
acclaimed by  
the experts in the  
U.S.A. as a breakthrough  
in recreational Kayaks,  
the 'Dancer' represents a  
completely new concept.  
Only 3.5 m (11' 7") long, it  
is exceptionally manoeuvrable  
without sacrificing forward speed.  
Suitable for heavy water, yet stable  
and easy to paddle in surf, rivers, lakes and  
white water. For lighter male or female paddlers.

September last year saw the opening of the A.C. Kayaks factory at the Deeside Industrial Estate, Clwyd, in North Wales. The December issue of 'Canoeing Magazine' carried a feature article on the factory and the revolutionary kayaks that were to be produced there — the Ace-Perception Mirage polyethylene kayak.

Just seven months later on 29th April, A.C. Kayaks were celebrating the production of their 1000th boat, and this was presented to the British Canoe Union to be given as a prize in a raffle for funds towards the Artificial Slalom Course to be built at the National Watersports Centre, Holme Pierrepont, Nottingham.

At the end of this October, I was invited back again to the Deeside factory to view the further progress made in the last twelve months.

The giant twelve tons of oven still dominates the factory, although the adjoining works unit has now been acquired and the dividing wall opened to give double the original floor space.

Great mounds of raw material await process in the mould and oven and to be turned into kayaks. Also one quarter of the total floor space is now taken up with framing to store finished boats, and a great number of Mirage or the new model from Perception were wrapped and stored on end awaiting purchase or dispatch to customers. At last such technological boats are available 'off the shelf'... far days from the four or eight week waiting period for fibreglass or kevlar boats.

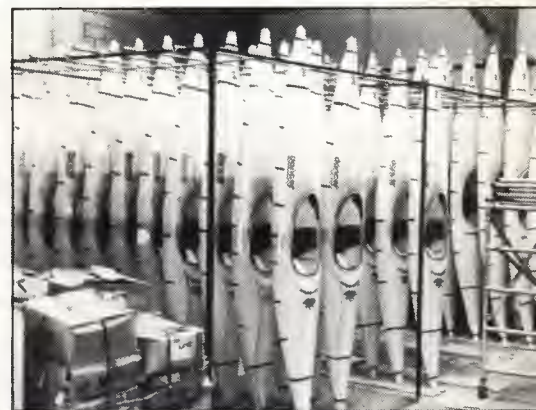
Part of the floor space is taken with the production of the rightly famous Ace crash helmet — a helmet so successful that it is recognised as among the very best for white water kayaking, waterskiing, windsurfing, or where a strong but lightweight headgear is required. Another section is now devoted to the production of the Ace range of paddles — at last Robin Witter is getting much of his specialised manufacture under one roof. But more important was the addition to the original oven.

The cycle on kayak production is some 40-minutes, but added to this must be mould cooling time, boat extraction, re-charging of the mould, and oven re-heating. With the use of just one track and one mould, six boats a day could be produced. But the oven and factory was designed to take a double track. Thus as one kayak mould was taken from the oven, a second kayak could be placed in the oven from the opposite side to give a continuous production throughout the day (moulds run out at around £15,000)... The new tacking and additional moulds are now at A.C. Kayaks and for the first time the full potential of production is being realised.

Not only was my visit a chance to see the factory in full flow, but also to see and photograph the newest of the Ace-Perception kayaks — the revolutionary 'Dancer'.

The Dancer has already been acclaimed by experts in the United States as a real breakthrough in recreational kayaks, and represents a completely new concept. When one looks at the recreational and general purpose kayak designs, the origins of all are derived from the slalom kayak and thus none are below the 4-metre mark in length (400cm). The Dancer has been designed at just 3.5 metres (350cm), or 11ft 7ins, and yet has proved to be highly manoeuvrable without loss of forward speed. It is very suitable for heavy waters, yet stable and easy to handle in surf, rivers,

# ACE PERCEPTION dancer



lakes or white water. The Dancer will be found to be eminently suited to the lighter male or female paddler. The specifications are: Length 3.5 metres: width 61cm: weights 15kg: medium volume: available in yellow, blue, red, black, or natural with contrasting trim.

Like the Ace-Perception Mirage, the new Dancer has a comfortable moulded seat, a large cockpit for ease of entry or exit, fully adjustable Yakima footrests, grab-loops at bow and stern to BSI/BCMA standards, and rounded ends for extra safety. The Dancer is one-piece 'Gyroflow' moulded hull and deck, while the design features a unique rocker and low rear deck for ease of rolling. However, in both Mirage and Dancer, the original moulded centre web/-rib has now been replaced with a more acceptable solid foam centre bracing that gives buoyancy, added rigidity and safety. (The previous Mirage centre web design can be factory replaced with the new seat design and foam bracing for just under £40,000 ex-carriage of course. Full details direct from A.C. Kayaks Limited).

With an overnight stay and the Llangollen International Slalom being held over the weekend, there was a chance to

take one of the new Dancer kayaks on to the Dee and put it through its paces on the famous Serpent's Tail rapid. In the photographs the paddler is Johnathon Davis, the Welsh Slalom Team Paddler.

The water conditions did not prove to be so spectacular as last year when Peter Knowles managed a superb 'pop-out' on the Tail, but nevertheless the Dancer was showed to be a lively and highly manoeuvrable kayak, and capable of being taken into the roughest of water. Along with the Mirage, the manufacture in polyethylene produces a kayak almost virtually indestructible — the odd rock, or even a great number of rocks, is of no danger to the hull of these kayaks. Drop the boat down a gorge, hack it over rocks . . . the hull will stand up to anything the roughest rivers have to offer. The Mirage and Dancer will give you literally years of top performance and service far above that to be expected from glassfibre kayaks.

For full details of the new Dancer, the original Mirage, plus Ace Crash helmets and paddles, write direct to: A.C. Kayaks (Chester) Limited, PO Box 62, Chester, England. Telephone: 0244 311711.

Photographs around the A.C. Kayaks factory at Deeside.

# ACE PERCEPTION **dancer**

*Welsh Slalom Team member Johnathon Davis putting the Dancer through its paces at Llangollen.*



# THE INTERNATIONAL CANOE EXHIBITION & ITS ORGANISING COMMITTEE

reviewed by Jack Travers

Even after the twenty odd years during which an exhibition of canoes and canoeing equipment and clothing has been held, there still appears to be a misconception as to what the Exhibition stands for. It is to bring to the public the activity of canoeing in all its aspects and thus to encourage an increase in participation and, hopefully, an increase in membership of the BCU.

The Organising Committee has, since 1982, been formed under the auspices of the BCU, who provide the secretariat. The present composition of the Committee is as follows:-

An Independent Chairman

Two members from the Sports Council (One G.L. & S.E. and One Crystal Palace NSC).

Two nominees of BCU Council.

Two representatives of the Manufacturers (One BCMA and One Independent Manufacturer).

The BCU Development Officer — acts as Committee Secretary.

The BCU Administrator.

Two Co-opted members (one of whom is the Director of Coaching).

The Committee meets at least once each month through the year.

Apart from the BCU Headquarters and all the Committees representing the disciplines in the BCU no individual, organisation or trader has a *right* to be represented at the Exhibition. All the exhibitors are *invited* each year to attend.

The reason for the issue of invitations is obvious. Clearly, since the BCU are the organisers, it may be assumed by the public that all the traders, both retail and manufacturing, are present with their (BCU) approval. Which they are. Consequently the public might also assume that all goods offered for sale also have BCU approval. Which they do not. However, the Union feels it has a moral obligation to the public to provide what safeguards it can. It is for this reason that BCMA and Independent Traders representatives sit on the Organising Committee which vets all applications for stands.

Another safeguard introduced recently, following a recommendation from the 'trade', allows only those manufacturers and retailers who can demonstrate an acceptable level of activity within the canoeing market are allowed to exhibit. The intention is to protect the good name of the trade, and the Union, by ensuring that the customer should have an opportunity for recourse if goods prove to be inadequate or faulty.

Recent refinements of longstanding rules safeguard the relationship between the exhibitors and the Exhibition Committee. The only body the Exhibition Committee will deal with is a bone-fide business. If a business 'ceases to trade', or is sold, then

the invitation to exhibit will be withdrawn and the exhibition space re-distributed.

In the event of a sale, if the Committee is kept fully informed of the transaction then it will, at its discretion, transfer the stand to the new owners of the business.

Even with these safeguards, which have been introduced in the best interests of the exhibitors and the public, from time to time a firm or individual will attempt to obtain or retain exhibition floor space with the full knowledge that it or he is not complying with the stipulations laid down. In many spheres of course one always finds those who consider themselves above the law.

Over the years suggestions have been made that Crystal Palace National Sports Centre is no longer large enough to accommodate a complete representative display of canoeing. There are perhaps grounds for agreement with this point of view. There are, for example, over twenty potential exhibitors on the waiting list for stands at the 1984 Exhibition. However the idea that canoeing is big enough as an activity to justify being moved to a National Exhibition Centre ie. Olympia or the

Birmingham International Exhibition Centre is ludicrous. The cost of hire of such centres, which would have to be for a period of not less than a week, means that few canoe manufacturing firms could stand the cost of floor space rental, the complications of dealing with the trade unions concerned in the erection of stands and lighting would make the project unfeasible. Also with the exception of the trade and BCU Headquarters, all the stands are manned by volunteers who might find great difficulty in obtaining time off from their normal employment. Even with the limited space at Crystal Palace the average attendance for the past five years has been in excess of 10,000 visitors. This has meant something in excess of £100,000 in business for the trade.

It will have been noticed by regular supporters of the Canoe Exhibition that each year has a theme which is reflected in the poster and cover of the programme. 1984 being Olympic year once again our artist has excelled himself in producing a design which embodies the canoeing aspect of this great event.



## International Canoe Show

MAKE A DATE FOR THE CANOE SHOW  
CRYSTAL PALACE — SATURDAY — SUNDAY

18th/19th FEBRUARY 1984

## J & R FOOTREST

Having introduced a brand new concept in footrests at Crystal Palace in February 1983, Tim Ward Canoes are now pleased to announce the availability of a modified version.

It was widely known and joked about that the original was an adaption of a shelf bracket. The new style however, is made using extrusions manufactured by a well-known aluminium company, which have been designed specifically for the job. The footrest is now much stronger (the original conformed to double BSI standards) and has been made easier to fit by cutting a thread through the track itself so there are no nuts to come loose. This all-British product is fitted to the kayak with bolts, locks by friction and is therefore infinitely adjustable. All parts are captive and at £9.50 or £10.00 for the two lengths it is the answer for all those who turn pale at the thought of grovelling inside a boat to glass in a fixed bar or fiddle endlessly with loose bolts and wing nuts.

J & R Footrests are available through many canoe retailers or direct from: *Tim Ward Canoes, Unit 2, The Common, Stokenchurch, High Wycombe, Bucks. Telephone: 024 026 2959*

## WYE KAYAKS

Wye Kayaks have recently begun importing the very interesting and very cheap French polyethylene kayaks from the French firm 'Cochois'. The low buoyancy 'Initial' and the super Bat Polo kayak are selling very well. U.K. Distribution to the trade is also through Wye Kayaks.

Wye Kayaks have now taken over the whole of their original building in East Street, Hereford. Not only have they increased their stocks of canoes and accessories, but they have a massive array of gear for the climber mountaineer, hillwalker, camper, and windsurfer. The shop also has a new name 'The Great Outdoor Shop'. New manager is Tony Preece. Opening hours 9.00-5.30 Monday to Saturday.

## SKIJAK — WALKING ON WATER

An interesting leaflet dropped on the office desk recently — but no covering press release — which featured the Skijak and walking on water. A mini-kayak on each foot and a long shafted double bladed

# TRADE NEWS

NEWS AND PREVIEW OF EQUIPMENT AND GEAR

paddle . . . The idea looks great fun, but running across rapids on such equipment must be pretty unstable (maybe 'running' is not quite the right word here!).

Organisation seems to be Austria. Details maybe from: *Skijak, Helmut Strohemeier, A-8605 Kapfenberg, Poschenweg 10, Austria.*



## THREE NEW BROCHURES FROM INDESPENSION

Indespension, the National Trailer Company, introduce three new brochures in full colour detailing their range of equipment.

The first is a general leaflet giving a brief resume of the range of trailers, equipment and service that Indespension have to offer. The second is a specific leaflet on the unique '3 ways to buy' offered by Indespension. To tow away a complete trailer, to save pounds by assembling a set of new parts, or to save even more by buying second-hand wheels and hubs with indespension components. The third is a comprehensive goods trailer leaflet showing how a great deal can be moved for less.

Copies of these leaflets are available from: *Indespension, Belmont Road, Bolton, Lancs. Telephone: 0204 58434.*

## TOP FORM NATURALLY

Every sportsman and woman strives to be in peak condition when competing. Some, in their endeavour to achieve maximum performance, unfortunately turn to drugs, a practise that has ruined many sporting careers because stimulation induced by synthetic drugs in pursuit of improved performance has, frequently, had adverse effects on health.

In contrast, natural health products can help provide that additional energy, which every athlete is seeking, in complete safety. An example is Healthitone, described as an encapsulated power pack which can aid competitors in attaining top form the natural way without unpleasant side effects.

Healthitone, from Dietary Specialities of Mortlake, contains a combination of twelve vitamins, twelve minerals and sixteen extra nutrients and are particularly effective as a supplement for sports people who have to diet to remain in top form. In addition, Healthitone contains Selenium, which, says the Food and Drugs Administration of America in a recent report, is essential for fertility in both men and women.

Another natural health product from Dietary Specialities is Oystertone. The oyster is one of the richest known sources of minerals, vitamins and amino acids known to man and this has led to the production of the Oystertone capsule. The



mineral content includes calcium for bone strength; magnesium to keep the body in top form; copper for the formation of blood and bone; zinc for growth, sexual maturity and wound healing; potassium for blood pressure and manganese, so essential for activating the enzyme system. Also present are vitamins, A, B2, B6 and B12.

It is now claimed that Healthitone and Oystertone work miracles, but there is evidence that both the products contribute to better health and give extra zip to people engaged in athletics and other energy consuming sports.

Both products are available from all good health food stores and chemists throughout the UK. Healthitone comes in packets of 30 capsules for £2.19 and Oystertone in packs of 48 capsules for £5.95.

#### POLARPELT — THE UBRAN EXPLORER

**Ultimate Equipment, the UK's leading manufacturer of specialist tents, sleeping bags, and outdoor clothing, have recently launched for the leisure market an exciting range of garments under the name of Urban Explorer. Included in this range are jackets and pullovers made from a superb new fleecy fabric trade-named 'Polarpelt'.**

Unlike other fibrepile materials, Polarpelt feels like a woven woollen cloth. It is a 100% polyester knitted fabric, brushed on both sides. The garments comprise two jackets that open fully down the front, and two pullover styles with a shorter zipper at the neck. One pullover and one jacket are offered in heavyweight material only, while the other designs are available in both weights. Colours for the lighter material are Antique Blue and Red, while the heavier fabric comes in French Navy, Grey, Biscuit and Burgundy. The garments should retail at just over £24.00 and under £30.00.

#### SHARK BAY '81

**In 1981 a team from Durham University set out on an Expedition to Shark Bay in NW Australia. The aims of the Expedition were to carry out a biogeographical survey of the central Great Sandy Desert; to examine the fauna of the Hamersley Ranges; and to carry out biometric studies in birds in the Shark Bay region of Western Australia.**

Ultimate Equipment provided three Phazor Dome tents, and six Three Season Synthetic Mummy sleeping bags with full-length zips. The Tent and Sleeping Bags performed exceptionally well in very hostile conditions, as the following quote from the Expedition Report shows:-

*'The tents were easy to erect; sand valances coupled with their dome shape meant that they were resistant to wind gusts in any direction. Their design made them very light to carry, yet they were very specious inside. The Sleeping Bags met our requirements perfectly. When used in conjunction with canvas swag covers they were warm on nights when temperatures dropped below -5°, yet the inclusion of a full-length zip enabled comfortable sleeping in much warmer conditions.'*

The long delay in publishing the Expedition Report, which came out in July 1983, was because much of the material contained in the Report is scientifically complex and needed lengthy verification. For further information please contact: *Ultimate Equipment Limited, Ryburne Mill, Hanson Lane, Halifax HX1 4SE.*

*Right: Polarpelt gear and expedition gear from Ultimate Equipment.*

#### SEA REACH

**At the beginning of November, 'Sea Reach' opened its door to a 650 sq.ft. showroom, offering an eager public a range of kayaks and equipment, second to none in the area.**

Owned and staffed by a family of enthusiasts, it was felt the lack of a retail outlet catering for all branches of the sport, justified the opening of a centre whose aim is to keep prices competitive while supplying a service of advice and high quality products. Full details from: *Sea Reach, Unit 1B, Franwill Farm Estate, Down Roa, d Pimperne, Blandford, Dorset.*



#### VALLEY CANOE PRODUCTS LTD

**All V.C.P. Buoyancy Aids have passed the BCU/BMA standard -BA-83, and will be in future carry the logo which is a seal of approval.**

The seal looks like below, so when you're looking for a B.A. approved expressly for the canoeist, look for stocks at V.C.P. or their agents. The B.A.'s are the following:

Chevron Standard  
Chevron with Zip  
Chevron Instructor (with zip and pockets)  
Chevron Expedition (no zip, but big pockets)

Chevron Junior

And of course, VCP's latest line in style and comfort, the Tabard available as both a standard and a pocketed version. Prices are from £17.50 incl VAT. Full details from: *Valley Canoe Products Limited, Private Road 4, Colwick Estate, Nottingham. Telephone: 0602 614995.*



#### ECLIPSE RACING

**Eclipse Racing is a new company established to cater for the needs of the racing canoeist. The company has been formed by Allan Bennett, already well known for his involvement in the watersports trade and is an accomplished marathon paddler.**

Being specialists, Eclipse will supply the exciting needs of racing canoeists, with emphasis on quality. Eclipse racing will initially be selling boats from the Kirton Kayaks range (including Tiger, Cleaver and Lancer K1s; Pacer, Makker and Mirage K2s) in a variety of constructions, and the Carbocraft honeycomb K1. In addition, there will be new models available in the near future. All leading makes of paddles, clothing and roof racks are available and, Allan says, there will be many special offers for the bargain-hunters!

Of interest to competitors in all aspects of canoeing are Isokinetic Training Machines which are available ex-stock from Eclipse (an article by Allan on Isokinetic training will be published shortly in 'Canoeing Magazine').

Eclipse Racing can be seen at events throughout the year or Allan can be contacted on Romford 25637.

# CANOEING CLASSIFIED

**CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS:** Trade Adverts @ 10p per word (Minimum £3.00 pre-paid) Non trade Adverts are published free of charge.

## CANOES & KAYAKS

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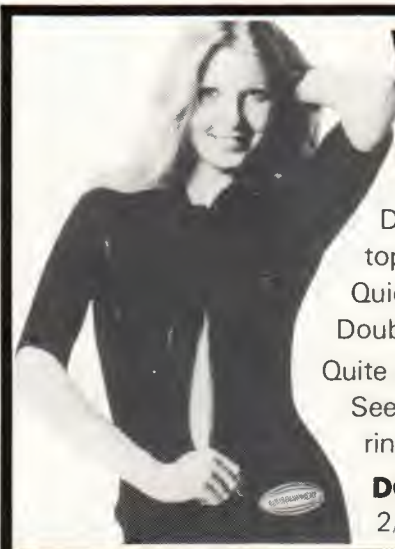
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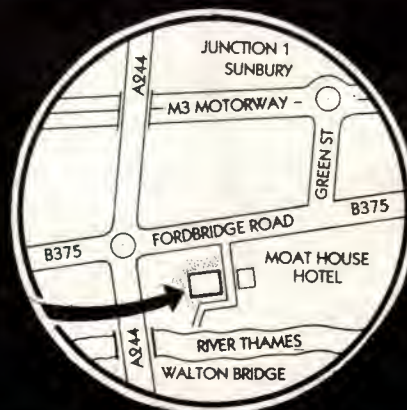
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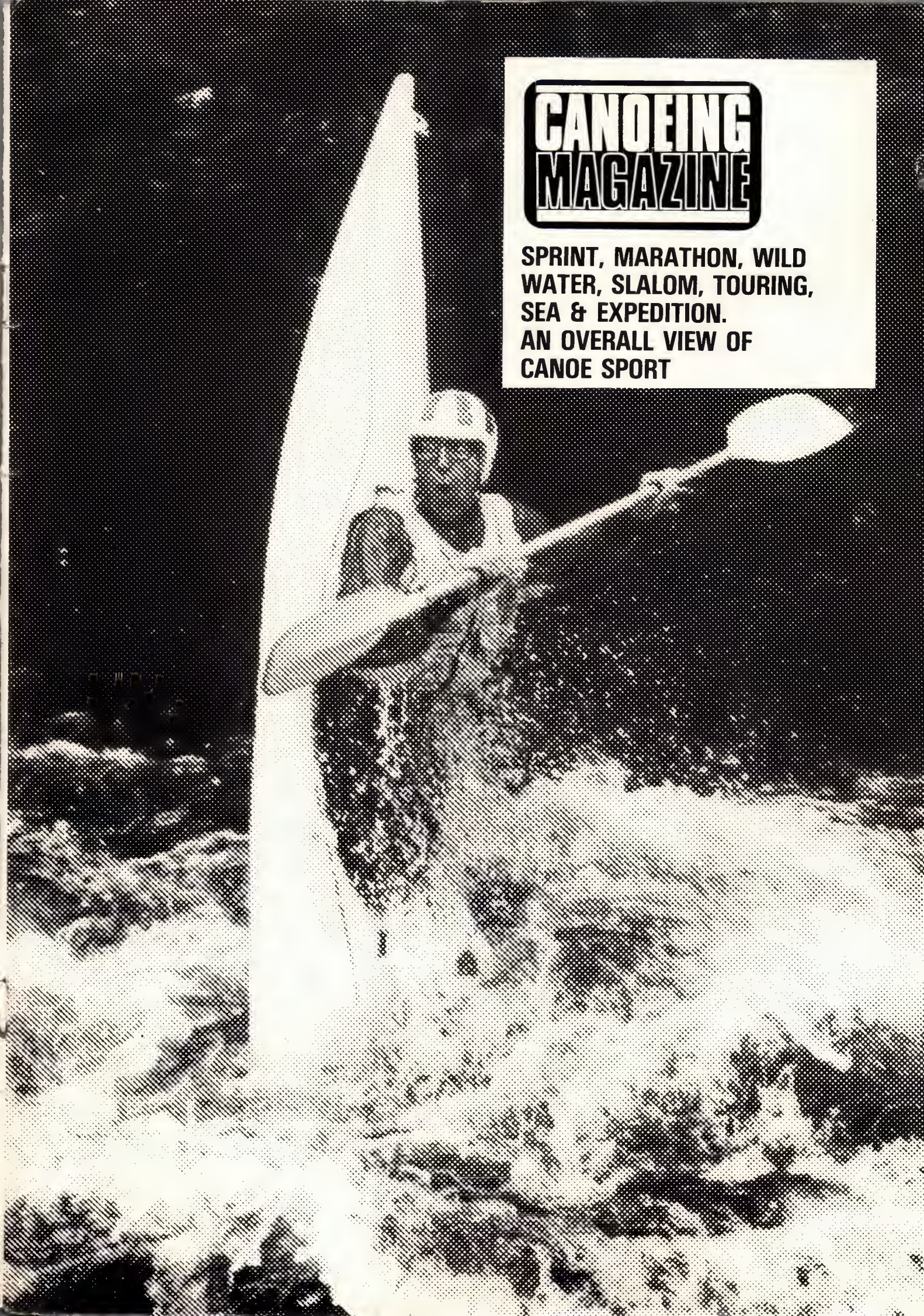
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