

February 2005

# Canoeist

Incorporating **Ocean Kayaker** and *Paddlers World*

**Philippines**  
**First indigenous people to stop a World Bank project**

**Indian first canoe descent**  
**Woks of sand and a friendly sniffer**



**Hurricane Frances causes Canadian epic**  
**North America's only canoe museum**  
**Isle of Wight circumnavigation**

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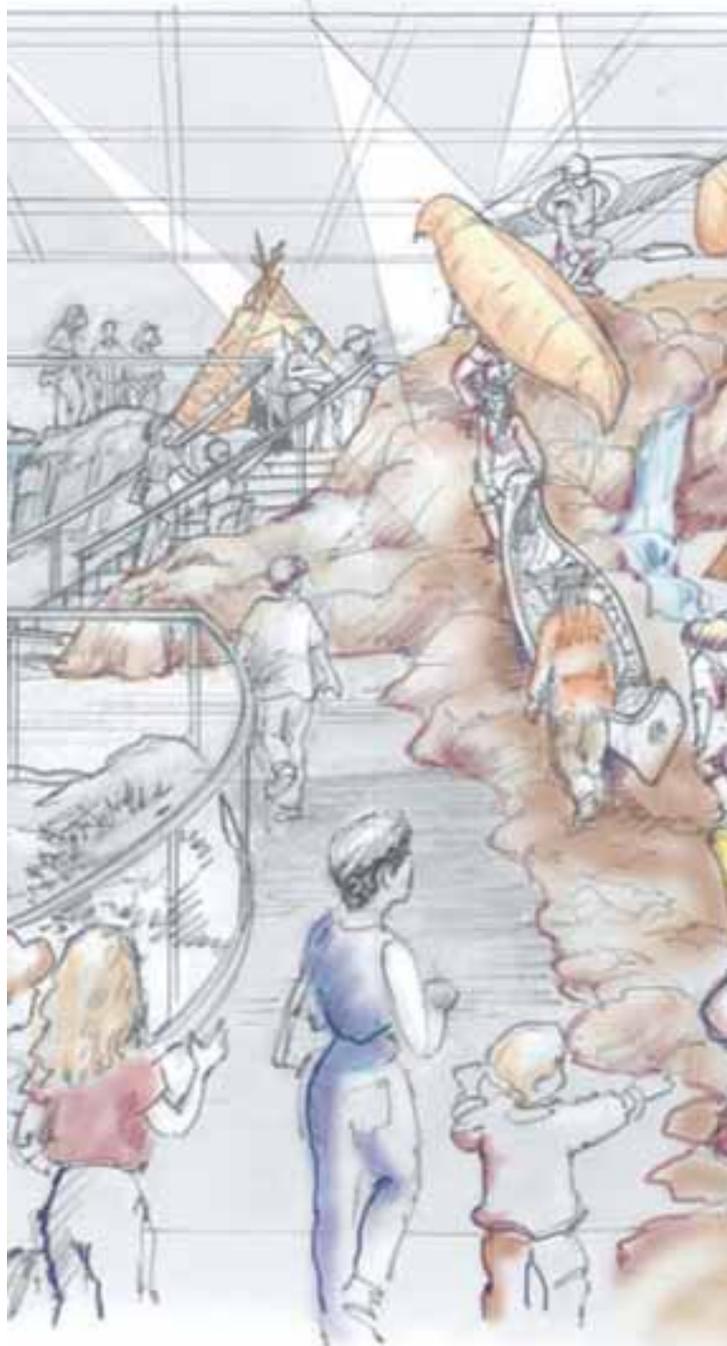
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# February

# Editorial

Representing 13,000,000 people in sport, the CCPR have been protesting loudly to the Government that licensing arrangements intended to limit binge drinking in public houses and night clubs should not apply also to bars of non profit sports clubs. The Government have responded by pushing the figures up a further 50%. Many sports club bars face rises in the order of many thousands of

## Where the risk really lies

percent, those even able to find out at this stage what the rises will be. Sports clubs on tight budgets often depend on their bar takings to top up the finances. In some cases clubs will have to close. Sports clubs largely have members for whom serious drinking is the exact opposite of their interests and offer environments where serious drinking is not welcomed. Some

people will be driven out of sports clubs which will now fold and some will move into environments where binge drinking is the norm, especially if licensing hour restrictions are removed. At a time when health issues and excessive drinking are hot topics we see people being pushed out of sport and into less healthy circumstances in the name of reducing binge drinking and making people healthier.

I am currently facing relicensing of my miniflare gun, not that I have been able to get replacement flares for a decade, the German manufacturers having abandoned the British market after the Home Office made their produce unusable by redesignating it as a firearm with all that implies. This time the police want £40, four photographs and a pile of documentation. Last time, two referees had to fill out long forms about whether I was a fit person to have a firearm and I was supposed to buy a gun cabinet, starting price £40, presumably to use after I had washed the salt off and it had dried out although I am not sure whether I should have had them in the car and kayak as well. The cost price for this plastic handle and six miniflares was £29.95, just to keep a sense of proportion. This device floats and could be fired with one hand, meaning that it was not necessary to let go of the boat, unscrew a cap and pull a chain, using two hands each time a flare was to be fired, or to insert a flare into a pistol tube for firing. The result is that I no longer take the safest flare gun on the market to sea with me when I go out. From the Home Office point of view it is now much harder for me to shoot someone on land with one of these, not that it was easy before, only firing within 15° of vertical, perhaps one reason why nobody has been shot with one as far as I am aware. On the other hand, nobody can use one to save life at sea. Lives definitely have been lost because flares have not been carried by paddlers on the sea, the Lyme Bay case being a prime example. Some Home Office official probably thinks the part of the world to which he relates is a safer place.

It seems that some schools have abandoned swimming lessons because they cannot meet the recommended staffing ratios. Have an accident while not following the guidelines and your neck will be in a legal noose. It is better not to have lessons at all if enough staff are not available. So, less children are being taught to swim and more are drowning, a fact. It is inconvenient but we are saving the rare swimming pool accident in which someone could have been held accountable.

What have these three scenarios in common, other than the fact that they happen to be in this week's batch? In each case, looking at the wider picture produces exactly the opposite outcome from what was claimed in the narrow circumstances for which the rules have been intended. It is also hard to put the blame for the final outcome on the original perpetrator in each case. Instead, the blame is usually piled on the person who has been put at risk.

As I write, exhibitors for the OS Outdoor Show are filling out their annual books of forms. One of these is a risk assessment, listing out all the things which could possibly go wrong and how they will be addressed. Perhaps those who devise regulations should also have to produce risk assessments covering all the outcomes of their rules, both in the immediate circumstances and further away.

Stuart Fisher

### Publishers

Canoeist is published every month by S T & R J Fisher  
4 Sinodun Row, Appleford-on-Thames, Oxon OX14 4PE  
Fax: 01235 847520

Email: mail@canoeist.co.uk (Beware: pictures for printing need to be very much higher resolution than for on screen display, ie about 20 times the file size, and so are better sent by post.)  
Web site: canoeist.co.uk

### Copy date

Copy date for each issue is the first day of the preceding month.

### Subscription rates

£35.40 per year for 12 issues.

### Disclaimer

Opinions expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the editor or publishers. References to waters do not necessarily imply that access or passage is legally permitted or that they are safe in all conditions. The editor and publishers can not be held responsible for any omissions of references to hazards from notes on these waters. They do not necessarily support advertising claims nor do they hold themselves responsible for inadequacies in items of equipment reviewed here.

### Governing body enquiries

Canoeist is an independent magazine. Enquiries to governing bodies and associations should be addressed to them, not to this magazine. Addresses are to be found on the Classified pages.



**Cover:** The initial part of Mike Norman's series on the first canoe descent of the Cauvery River in southern India to the Bay of Bengal begins on page 48. Here, one of the locals tries his hand in an unfamiliar boat.



[www.canoeist.co.uk](http://www.canoeist.co.uk)

The Canoeist website is simple to use but gives you a lot of information. As well as details on the current issue there is extensive indexing if you are trying to locate a special article from the past. In particular, the texts of all the guides in issues which have sold out are available free. Just go to the map, click on the water of interest and the guide will download instantly.

# Calendar

## TOURING

### February

- 6 N Berwick - Bass Rock - Tyne Mouth Return, K, A/B [0131 667 6872]  
6 *Caldon Canal* [0151 652 4377]  
6 *R Lea, 0* [020 8983 0960]  
6 Leven access  
13 *Wey Navigation* [01403 267244]  
13 Leven access  
19/20 *Kennet & Avon Canal* [01235 522489]  
20 *R Penk & Canal* [0114 287 4705]  
25 *R Tees, 2 - 3+* [01434 605118]  
25 - 27 Bear Creek Adventure Open Canoe Fest, Glasbury on Wye  
26 *R Lune, 2 - 3+* [01434 605118]  
26/27 *Luxury in Glencoe, K, A* [0131 667 6872]  
27 *R Eden, 2 - 3+* [01434 605118]  
27 Leven access

### March

- 4 - 6 *R Warfe, 2/3* [0114 287 4705]  
5 *St Abbs/S Return, K, A/B* [0131 667 6872]  
6 *Tarbert & Northern Reaches of L Lomond, K, A* [0131 667 6872]  
6 Leven access  
6 *Grand Union & R Gade* [01403 267244]  
7 *Gt Ouse, 0* [020 8983 0960]  
11 - 13 NW Adventure Paddlers Weekend, Lakeside [0161 474 1499]  
12/13 *Descent of Tay, C, A/B*  
12/13 *Brecon & Abergavenny Canal* [01235 522489]  
12/13 *R Trent/Trent & Mersey Canal* [01773 712154]  
18 - 20 R Ure, 2 [0114 287 4705]  
19/20 *R Dove* [01889 570258]  
19 - 27 1st Pagaia Sea Symposium, Llança  
20 Leven access  
25 - 28 Easter on R Avon [01235 522489]  
27 *Clyde/L Lomond, K, A* [0131 667 6872]

A/B/C - Proficiency/Proficiency + /Advanced. K/C - kayak/canoe. 1 - 6 - grade.

## SURFING

### March

- 27/28 NE, K, Sandend  
W - wave skis (British Wave Ski Association. K - kayak (BCU). I - international. HP - high performance. O - open. BCU Yearbook £2.00 + A5 SAE from 41 Long Barton, Kingsteignton, Newton Abbot, Devon TQ12 3QP.

## MARATHON

### February

- 6 Thameside 1  
12/13 *Hansa Umkomaas*  
13 *Waterside B, Southern*  
20 *Linlithgow Winter Time Trial*  
20 Thameside 2  
23 *Devizes - Westminster Race lecture, Newbury*  
27 *Waterside C, Southern*  
27 *5th Hare & Hounds, Riverside*

### March

- 6 *Royal, K1/K2, Southern*

- 13 *Huntingdon, K1H*  
13 *Waterside D, Southern*  
20 *Linlithgow Winter Time Trial*  
25 - 28 *Devizes - Westminster, I*  
27/28 *Open Australian Championship*  
H - Hasler final qualifier. K2 - no Div 1 K1. K1 - no Div 1/2 K2. L - long course. S - short course. Yearbook £4.50 from Diane Bates, 11 Cranley Rd, Burwood Park, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey KT12 5BX.

## WILD WATER RACING

### February

- 5 *Derwent, CI, B/O/U*  
5/6 **Inter Services Championships, CI, HI/B/O, Nith**  
6 *Exe, CI, B/O/U*  
12 *Goyt, CI, B/O/U*  
12/13 *Aughrim, CI/Sp*  
12/13 *Hansa Umkomaas Marathon*  
12/13 *Irwell 1 & National J Prizegiving, Sp, B/O/Wh/U*  
19/20 *Dart 1/2, CI/Sp, A/B/O/SW Championships*  
20 *Leny/Teith, CI, O*  
26 *Derwent, CI, B/O/U/E Midlands Championships*

### March

- 5 *Thistlebrig 2, CI/Sp, A/B/Scottish Championships*  
5/6 *Team Trials, CI/Sp, R Nantahala*  
5/6 **Grandtully & National Prizegiving, CI, HI/A/B**  
12/13 *Obere Fulda, CI*  
19 *Dove, CI, B/O/U*  
W - world ranking. A - restricted entry international. B - invitation international. C - unrestricted entry international. CI - classic. Sp - sprint. A/B/C - Divisions. OC - open canoes. U - under 14 and under 16. Yearbook £3.50 + 57p A5 SAE from Sarah Wright, Church Lea, 26 Church St, Hemswell, Lincs DN21 5UQ.

## SLALOM

### February

- 12/13 **British Univs Championships, Teesside**  
19/20 *Eurolympics, Roches du Diable*  
19/20 *WW Series, Penrith*  
26/27 *Eurolympics, Lannion*

### March

- 5/6 *Shepperton, 1/2*  
13 *Stone, 3/4*  
19/20 *Energy Australia, Penrith*  
19/20 *Holme Pierrepont, P/1*  
25/26 *Energy Australia, Penrith*  
26/27 **Grandtully, I/PC/1/2**  
A - restricted entry international. B - invitation international. C - unrestricted entry international. P - Premier division. 1 - 4 divisions. CI - club event. Yearbook £4.00.

## FREESTYLE

### March

- 11 - 13 *National Student, Holme Pierrepont*  
18 - 20 *Wavebox, Birmingham*  
R - ranking. Yearbook from Bev Chrimes, 14 Kingswood Rd, W Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 7HS.

## MULTISPORT

### February

- 26 *Hereford Duathlon*

### March

- 18 - 20 **Indoor Adventure Racing Championships, Birmingham**

## SPRINT

### February

- 19/20 *National New Zealand Championships, Lake Pupuke*  
20 *Winter Time Trial*

### March

- 19 *Rovigo*  
20 **European Cup, Milano**  
22 - 26 *Open Australian Championships, Penrith*  
26 *Rovigo*  
Yearbook £4.50 from Diane Bates, 11 Cranley Rd, Burwood Park, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey KT12 5BX.

## POLO

### February

#### 5 National Playoffs

- 12 *Coventry, M2S*  
12 *Derby, 3C*  
12 *York, 3N*  
12 *Luton, 3S*  
19 *Coventry, M1*  
19 *Erith, L2S*  
19 *Derby, Y2*  
20 *Belfast Varsities*

### March

- 5 *Derby, 4C*  
5 *Irlam, 4N*  
5 *Luton, 4SE*  
5 *Bristol, 4SW*  
5 *Coventry, L1*  
12 *Leeds, M1*  
12 *Derby, Y1*  
19 *Coventry, M2S*  
19 *Stratford upon Avon, 3C*  
19 *Irlam, 3N*  
19 *Erith, 3S*  
25 - 28 *Sydney*  
26/27 *Pas de Calais*  
N - national teams. C - club teams. 1 - 5 - divisions. ID - indoors. OD - outdoors. Yearbook £3.00 + 50p P&P from Beverley Dancer.

## DRAGON BOAT RACING

### February

- 13 **Congress, Henley-on-Thames**  
20 *Henley Winter Series*

### March

- 19 *5th Indoor, New York*  
27 *Henley Winter Series*  
C - Charity Challenge. N - national league. O - Open. S - Standard. Handbook from British Dragon Boat Association, 13 The Prebend, Northend, Leamington Spa, Warwick CV47 2TR.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### February

- 2 *Stanley Mill Hydro Scheme R Tay lecture, Glasgow*  
3 - 6 *Destinations Exhibition, London*  
3 - 6 *Scottish Caravan & Outdoor Leisure Show, Glasgow*  
18 - 20 *Outdoor Adventure Show, London*  
19 - 27 *44th National Boat Caravan & Outdoor Show, Birmingham*  
25 - 27 *Open Canoe Fest, Glasbury on Wye*

### March

- 4 - 6 *Destinations exhibition, Birmingham*  
12 - 20 *National Outdoor Week*  
18 - 20 *00S Outdoor Show, Birmingham*  
19 *Epoxy course, Romsey* [01794 521111]  
20 *R Lune clean up, Rigmaden*  
Italics - change, late addition or late notification. I - international. O - open. WC - world cup. GP - grand prix. EC - European championships or Europa cup. M/L/W/B/G - men/ladies/women/boys/girls. S/J/Y/V - senior/junior/youth/veteran. U18 - under 18.

## Longridge change trustees to secure future

As you will probably be aware, following the Scout Association's review of campsites and the inability to obtain flood insurance after the flooding of Longridge in January 2003, the county commissioners and chairmen of Bucks and Oxfordshire, being the trustees, felt they could no longer accept liability for Longridge and there was the strong possibility that the site would have to close. However, we are changing the charity setup with a new constitution and with different trustees. New trustees have come forward and negotiations are progressing with the Scout Association to secure the future of Longridge. This progress is in no small way due to the fantastic number of emails and letters of support that were sent to our trustees and headquarters and I thank you for that support.

As we now have no flood insurance we have to build up a reserve over the next few years to cover possible future flooding. To do this we have increased by approx 30% the camp/visit fee; other rates have increased by about 5%. Much as we did not want such an increase we feel it is worth doing, otherwise Longridge could be wiped out, not a scenario anybody would want.

### Graham Bucknell

*However, if you book at least 6 places on a basic BCU course there will be a 10% reduction, as there will be for the weekend of Aug 26 - 29th which is for Scout leaders, accompanied by their families rather than Scouts, for once.*

### And I quote...

... BCU chairman Brian Chapman on our change of format, 'Will we still see you around?' At the time I was the only canoeing journalist covering the national polo championships.

# Undercurrents

## Trips

What is worse than being pursued by a shark or a crocodile? Being pursued by both at once. 34 year old Andrew McAuley of Sydney has made the first solo 530km crossing of the Gulf of Carpentaria, the bight on the northern side of Australia. At one point he was being followed by a crocodile when a shark came and bit his rudder. He also encountered another shark and a number of sea snakes but his only lasting problem was ulcers from sitting in salt water for the duration. At night he fitted an outrigger and slept in the cockpit, having previously cut away part of the bulkhead.

\* Steve MacDonald, the partially sighted paddler who circumnavigated Great Britain with Peter Bray in 1996 and who has since crossed Australia on foot, is to tackle part of the Norwegian coastline solo. A possible route is to take in Nordkapp and then head south. He would like to borrow an audible compass from June to September this year. If you can lay hands on one, please call him on 01905 21156.

\* A joint Royal Navy/Canadian Forces expedition is to undertake a 5 day paddle and portage through the Algonquin Park. Overnight camps will be built along the way and the intensity should suit the participants, most of whom are novices.

## Canoeists at ExCel

Olympic bronze medallists Ian Wynne and Helen Reeves were at the Shroders London Boat Show to promote the London 2012 Olympic bid and were invited to join a reception for Sports Minister Richard Caborn. They were interviewed and shown on the large screens around the show. The show guide included a two page spread on Rachel Smith and our

women's dragon boat team. Meanwhile, at the other end of the spectrum, 400 novices 14 - 16 years old were able to try out open canoes, sit on tops and other boats between the major events in the pool with Rockley Watersports.

\* Numbers of visitors were only 170,000 this year, compared with 214,000 last year, but show organizer Paul Streeter pointed out that this was more than if the show had not moved from Earls Court. All sectors were claimed to have reported increased sales at the show but Lomo and Recreation UK both contradicted this, saying friends with stands in various parts of the show were all claiming less than 50% of the previous year's sales. Did small items sell differently from large boats? In fact, Lomo found they sold most of their double waisted cagoules not to canoeists but to sailors. These purchasers were not using massive spraydecks for their boats but were using the double waists to make watertight seals over the tops of their trousers. It seems likely that double waisted trousers could become a standard item for sailors in the future. [0141 334 7271]

\* Last year's show saw criticism of the toilets serving the East Hall, occupied by canoe traders. This year they were beyond reproach, wooden toilet surrounds, wallpaper, pictures on the walls and fittings which would not look out of place in your sitting room. We were tempted to bring you a photograph, but for the strange looks at a camera in the loos.

## Canoeists assist in Carlisle floods

During the January flooding in Carlisle, boaters were called in by the police and asked to help with rescue operations. There were four or five kayaks and a couple



*Taking part in the come and try it sessions at ExCel.*

of open canoes assisting. Carlisle Canoes were not amongst them, unable to reach their premises which were cut off by the floodwater.

## White Rose recover body

White Rose Canoe Club members assisted police in January by searching the River Aire for a 51 year old rambler reported missing. They found his body near Apperley Viaduct a week after the alarm was raised. It is believed the walker may have gone into the flooded river in an attempt to rescue a terrier, the body of which was found near by. This is not the first time the club have helped the police to search a swollen river for a missing person.

## Pontiac canoes aid rehabilitation

John Van Slembrouck of Stoney Creek Wooden Boat Shop in Rochester Hills normally charges \$300 for his canoe building courses but the ones he has chosen to build recently have been different. With materials donated by others, he has been supervising free of charge the construction of four canoes in a warehouse and the basement of a church used by the Grace Centers of Hope. The builders have been four men, a woman and four youths. The adults have histories of drug and alcohol abuse and the youths have been abused in various ways. Mostly they are parent and offspring. Each canoe should have taken six hours to build but they have taken five times as long over a period from November to January. This is no bad thing. It has allowed the youngsters to have constructive time with the adults, to learn some real skills and for all to produce something worthwhile. The project has resulted in the building of relationships as much as canoes.

## Individual objection

I have been taken to task by Fiona Whitehead over the December editorial, in which I commented that I had understood her term 'as an individual' to mean 'solo' on her trip round Great Britain and Ireland. She says it originated on her website, where she goes on to explain that she would be paddling parts of the journey with others. She disputes that 'as an individual' reads as 'solo', given the subsequent qualification. If you disagree with me that it is 'confusing terminology' (and I am not suggesting there was a deliberate attempt to confuse) then I stand guilty as accused and apologize.

## Tourability again

This special tour for special needs will be happening again this year on Jun 12th. It will be run on the River Severn from Arley to Bewdley and be free to all those with special needs. The event in 2004 encouraged approximately 40 paddlers with special needs onto the water; hopefully 2005 will exceed this. If you are interested in taking part as a group, individual or helper then please contact Dave Bateman. [0121 772 3739]

## Raising funds for Andy Nicoll memorial

I have decided to raise money for charity by competing in 3 endurance events, the Devizes to Westminster Canoe Race (125 miles) on 25th March, the Flora London Marathon on 17th April and the London to Brighton Bike Race on 19th June. I hope to raise over £1,600 through completing these events. In addition to the Children's Society I will be raising money to create a memorial for Andy Nicoll.

If you can support me then that would be great. Please use the link <https://www.bmycharity.com/alexhurt>

Alex Burt

## Another Olympia adventure show

The Outdoor Adventure Show takes place at Olympia over Feb 18 - 20th. Kayaks are one of the many activities listed. Entry fees are £12 on the door or £10 in advance.

## Only part of the story

Gordon Brown has pointed out that the Scottish Sea Kayak Symposium (Jan, p6) will be run by a team of which he and Morag are part and it is not a Skyak event as such.

## Andy Jackson weekend

An Andy Jackson memorial weekend is to be held over Apr 1st - 3rd, kicking off in the Ben Nevis Hotel in Fort William at 8pm for 8.30. It is hoped that there will be a band or ceilidh on Saturday night and some dam releases on rivers in the area for the weekend.

## Full house in Yorkshire

For the first time in ages the BCU's Yorkshire region now boasts a full committee. Dick Constable occupies the chair. Jonathan Dakeyne is the secretary and all relevant parties should ensure they are registered with him although attempts will be made to contact all clubs and disciplines in the region.

## It's there somewhere

You've seen something in Canoeist but now you can't find it? Remember that with Adobe Acrobat you have a facility to type in a relevant word and have the program search the entire magazine for you.

# DERRICK



*I don't understand you, Walter! House flooded, furniture ruined and you just sit there with an idiotic smile on your face!*

# Peter Bullamore

Peter Bullamore, Granddad, Dad, Pete, Petty Officer Bullamore, PO B and many more things to many people, that's how we all knew him.

We were very sad to hear the announcement of the loss of Peter Bullamore on 8th August 2004.

Peter suffered an aneurysm whilst on a canoeing holiday in France, surrounded by his friends and family, doing what he did best, paddling. This more or less summed up Peter's life, canoeing with his friends, away from work and the drab British summertime, taking each day as it came.

Peter's life in the Sea Cadets began when he was dragged along to Norwich Sea Cadets by his daughter, Becky, to 'help out' for a while with a bit of canoeing in 1987. However, 17 years later Peter was still with us and taking part in anything and everything from canoeing to rowing as well as power and sailing. Peter did everything with us and for us and that input is going to be sorely missed by both cadets and staff alike. Whilst the Sea Cadet Corps is a military based organization, Peter brought his own rules with him, the compulsory paddle at the weekend no matter what the weather, time or any other event that was taking place, even falling in for evening colours and presentations fully equipped with buoyancy aid and paddle, ready to hop in a canoe again at the next opportunity. This was the Norwich Sea Cadet Peter; as long as we were having a good time he was too!

Peter Bullamore was a granddad, dad, friend and many things to many people.

No matter how we knew him, though, we thought of him as a fun, loving man who really did do anything and everything. Ask any cadet at Norwich Sea Cadets what he remembers about Peter and you will get the same answer every time, canoeing. Be it a freezing New Year's

morning or a lazy July afternoon, Peter would be there. From Germany to England to France and back again, you name it, he's probably paddled it! With us, it was district training, Star tests, getting wet sessions or white water at Cardington. No matter where we went or what we did the new ones would come away with something, a sense of satisfaction, knowing that they too could paddle a canoe.

As for the more experienced ones of us, we came away with that sense of achievement every time we learnt something new, as well as the memories.

Memories of long trips, the good, the bad, the wet and the cold, also the people we'd met along the way, who all knew Peter, no matter where we were.

The memories of the fun times, Cardington in a damp September, with getting wet, bombing and mud fights, all initiated by Peter, but he'd always act the innocent and wait until certain people had their backs turned to join in.

This is just one of those special moments for us, one that we can remember and at which we can smile. Those of us who were taught by and inspired by Peter will know exactly how we feel when we recall these times and there are a lot of us.

Peter was a wonderful man, one up to whom we all looked and whom we admired. He made us laugh and smile and he even made us cry, a man who came to pick us up and drop us home again even if he had something else to do, no matter the time of day. So, thank you, Becky, for bringing dad to Norwich Sea Cadets. If he hadn't 'helped out' for that short time we would never have met Peter.

When I say this I know that I speak for the majority. I feel privileged to have known, been friends with and have enjoyed the company of Peter Bullamore and, no matter what, Peter is someone whom I will never forget, now and in years to come.

**Petty Officer Cadet Sally Spinks, Norwich Sea Cadets**

## Alpine news

At last snow has arrived in the southern French Alps. Because of the longstanding association UK boaters have with the area, we have a good idea how the area works.

Boating in early June is always going to be the high level time. The sun is regaining its strength and starting to get to grips with the lower altitude snow. This lower snow melts off quickly, swelling the rivers after their winter's freeze. Early season is usually for the more skilled boaters but as the summer moves on the lowering water levels allow the more modest boaters amongst us to gain access to this kayaking wonderland.

Many of the more exposed ski stations are having a hard time in high wind conditions but this is not bad news for us paddlers. The wind blows the snow into the rock gullies and compacts it, building reserves of water for the summer.

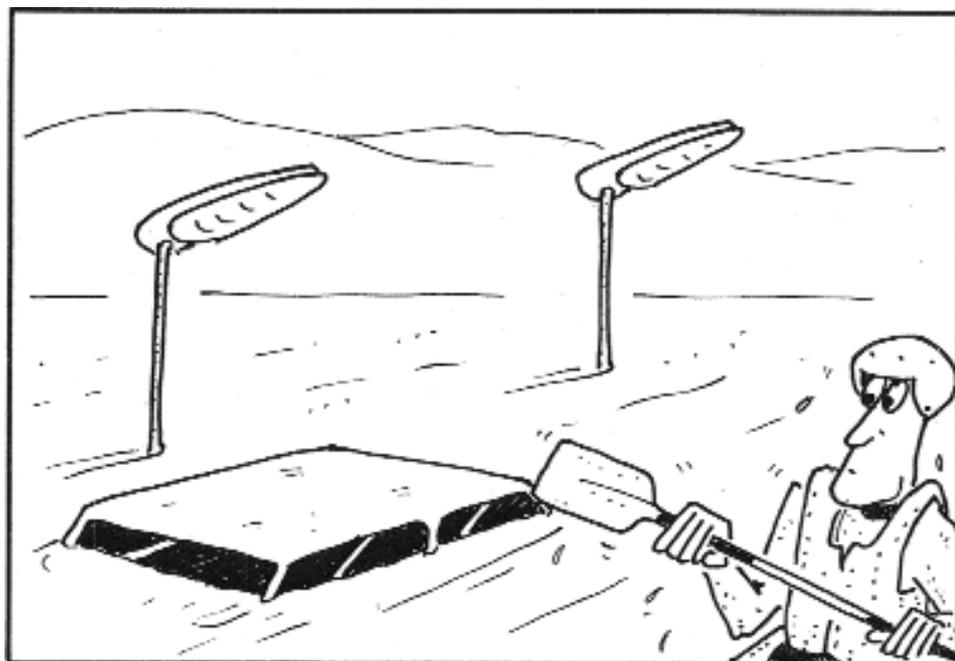
Because of the Massif Ecrin's southerly aspect we can expect lots of snow in February and March. One question I am always asked when returning from the Alps is did I have a good season. The answer is the Alps are like malt whiskey, never a bad one, just better.

Further south in Provence it is, at the moment, very cold and there is a lot of snow on the hills around the Verdon gorge. Last season much of the snow that fell in the south of France was on the mountains of Haute Provence and the Maritime Alps.

It was with regret that I heard that Mike Bruce has retired from Alpine kayak guiding. Mike was one of the first Brits to break into the French kayak guiding scene. Articles that Mike wrote back in the late 1980s about the area contributed to my starting my Alpine kayak school.

**Stuart Woodward, Jan 27th 2005, [www.canoecontrol.com](http://www.canoecontrol.com).**

### UP THE CREEK



*Paddling in flood conditions was fine but Henry was now wondering where his car was...*

## INCIDENT FILE

### Irwell incident

A paddler had to be rescued in the vicinity of an Irwell weir at Ramsbottom at the beginning of the year. Paramedics were called, apparently to treat hypothermia. The incident was near Railway Street but it is not clear whether the weir concerned is the one known to be dubious or the one just upstream at Bridge Street which was repaired last year. Please let us know if you have any further information.

# ACCESS & environment

## EA talk to some opposition groups

Opposition to the EA's licence harmonization plans (Nov, p10) has come from the IWA, Association of Waterway Cruising Clubs and National Association of Boat Owners amongst others. The EA are reported to be talking only to national governing bodies to address their concerns. There is a noticeable absence of approach to canoeing objectors.

## The Mole and the BBC

The BBC's *Country File* ran a 6 minute item on river access in January. BCU river advisor Noel Humphrey, who has spent 12 years getting access to 26km of the River Mole, was joined by presenter Miriam O'Reilly for an open canoe paddle. She complained about the muddy takeout, caused by the fact that the downstream landowner would not allow further passage. An angling shop staff member was interviewed, claiming that canoeists spook fish, disrupt breeding and are not compatible with angling, not explaining why these problems do not occur in the rest of the world. Olympic slalom medallist Helen Reeves was filmed, explaining her problem in finding places to train. Caroline Bedall of the Country Landowners Association was interviewed, claiming that there would be loss of income if anglers did not have exclusive use of rivers, expressing concerns about loss of privacy and liability issues and dismissing canoeists as not being high enough revenue earners. Tim Joiner of the BCU was interviewed with her, saying that canoeing is less intensive than angling, raising the fitness issue, claiming canoeists would like to negotiate and pointing out that only 6 rivers out of 300 in Wales have any access. Would the Government intervene? Alun Michael said existing rights could not just be wiped away and asked what legislation would make a difference. Answers on a postcard, please...

## Lower Tryweryn use restored

A new access agreement on the lower section of the River Tryweryn has been made between the EA and WCA. It will see year round access from the Canolfan Tryweryn to Bala, reopening 6km of the river, used from the mid 1970s but not available more recently. The section of the Tryweryn below the dam already enjoys year round access under the management of Canolfan Tryweryn. The lower section of the river is not as difficult to navigate, grade 2/3 with one reasonably easily portaged grade 4 drop where inspection is once again being allowed on river right with the route signposted. This agreement will provide a year round paddling venue for introductory and intermediate level white water paddlers. Ticket prices remain unchanged at £7 for BCU and ICU members and £14 for everyone else. (The money goes on construction and maintenance including Bala Mill fencing and portage trail, provision and maintenance of car parking facilities, provision of café facilities, provision of management staff and first aid services, purchase of water, £28,000 in 2004, shower and changing facilities, river works and maintenance with all

profits used to fund the work of the WCA.) Access will be via the centre and egress via the paying public carpark in Bala, a situation which will serve to increase the number of visitors to Bala and strengthen links between the centre and the town. This agreement is the result of the partnership between the EA, who own the river, and the WCA. Being a dam released river, the Tryweryn is an important facility in that it has reliable flows in the summer when most white water rivers are too low to paddle. This has seen the Tryweryn being chosen as the site for numerous national and world championships and will be used again for world level wild water racing events in 2005 and 2006. [01678 521083 ext 3]

## Access powers on land

Owners or occupiers of land covered by the new right of access in England and Wales may appeal to the Secretary of State if served with a notice requiring a means of access for walkers under new regulations which have come into force. Access authorities (national park authorities and the local highway authorities) have powers under the CRoW Act to make agreements with the owners and occupiers to improve ways onto newly mapped open access land. An agreement could include the provision of new gates, stiles, stairs, steps or bridges. Landowners may also agree not to block existing means of access. If the owner or occupier does not abide by an agreement or an agreement cannot be reached on reasonable terms the access authority may serve a notice requiring the owner or occupier to carry out any works specified by the agreement or to provide a new means of access. If an owner or occupier fails to comply with the notice, the access authority could carry out the work itself and recover the cost. The new regulations provide a right of appeal for the landowner against such notices. All of this applies only on land, of course. On water the concepts are beyond the comprehension of our leaders who believe England and Wales cannot possibly be like the rest of the world.

## Stanley lecture

The Institution of Electrical Engineers are presenting a lecture to their members and IIE and IMechE members on the *Stanley Mill Hydro Scheme River Tay*. It will be at Glasgow's Scottish Engineering Centre in St Enoch Sq at 6pm on 2nd and will be delivered by Npower's project manager. Such technical meetings usually welcome interested non members if they are not oversubscribed. Scottish paddlers have suggested that if the weir needs rebuilding it could include a playwave. The hydro scheme itself relates to the mill lade.

## Braan aired

The BBC's *Outdoor Programme* on Jan 15th featured a short piece on the Braan. John Picken put the SCA viewpoint, followed by an Npower interviewee, who was to back off their estimate of the small number of days the river would no longer be available for paddling. John pointed out how little of the Scottish energy requirements could be met by all these smalls dams, just 2.9MW in this case, equivalent to one wind turbine. Could it be that the biggest energy benefit would be from tourists no longer driving to view the falls?

## Smile for the camera

If you are paddling on the Dee at Llangollen, make sure you look as if you are enjoying yourself and are an asset to the area. Llangollen Anglers are reported to be filming groups on the river, presumably not with the intention of proving there is room for everyone.

## Anglers to contribute to Llandysul pool

Positive developments are taking place in southwest Wales where a new canoeing pool is to be dug upstream of the bridge. Anglers are to contribute to the cost and it will be stocked with fish for their use. Just above this Steve Wales is to pay for a river access point for paddlers.

## BW licence crackdown

BW are to target licence evaders on the Kennet & Avon Canal. People found without licences on their boats will be given 28 days to pay, after which BW may remove boats if repeated requests are ignored.

## B&MK decision sent back

The decision by Milton Keynes Council not to safeguard the line of the proposed Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway (Jan, p25) has been overturned by their Scrutiny Panel, following extensive representation by a range of interests. It will now go back for further consideration in February.

## Scottish access coordination

Following the death of Andy Jackson, John Picken will be covering some of the access work until a successor can be appointed. Advertising for the post is expected in March. John can be contacted on 01467 671315.



# Everybody's gone surfing

The first indigenous people to stop a World Bank project



I headed into the Chico country. The Philippine trip was Gary Fondren's. He had started a rafting co-op on the Chico River and had talked David McNeil and his collaborator, Dale White, into running a swiftwater river rescue course for the local and not so long ago headhunters, the Kalingas. As for myself, Gary wanted an article on the river. I thought the Philippines about as synonymous with white water as the moon is for human habitation. That and my knowledge of the country was, at best, limited. Off the top of my thoughts were Imelda and her three thousand shoes ('I did not have 3,000 pairs of shoes. I had one thousand and sixty!' - Imelda), routine ferry sinkings, active volcanoes and an avalanching mountain of Manila's garbage burying alive the inhabitants who lived at its base and who climbed and picked through it for their meagre existence but paddling wasn't the only thing about which to write, Gary said, tempting me to join the trip.

There was the killing of Macli-ing and the Kalinga's fight against the dams, the first I'd ever heard of it. 'The story,' Gary maintained, 'Is too good not to be printed. The good guys won! It's an inspiration to all of humanity for people facing adversity.' In a moment of weakness, a raging blizzard outside my window, I thought again about tropical white water in January.





Warming to the idea, I checked out the web, discovering that if all the land mass of the Philippines ('It's bad enough that the Philippines is really hamburgered geographically.' - Imelda) was smunched together you'd have a country a little larger than New Zealand. Equating it to New Zealand, I suddenly saw the potential for rivers. In 1986 Gary had seen it, too, flying over via jet. He began studying maps. Up until that time those few who saw the country's white water potential were scared away by political unrest since most of the rivers ran through troubled areas, hotbed of the communist New People's Army. Allegedly, the country was on the mend. Gary had returned in 1997 to run the Chico. What he found was not only a fantastic piece of water but he met the Kalinga, learning of their heroic fight in stopping their valley from being flooded.

At the same time I read up on the country's history and researched the dams. I became fascinated. I told an old friend, familiar with the Philippines, and said I was thinking of going. He advised me to think twice because, next to cockfighting, American hostage taking had become the national pastime. A week later he emailed me, letting me know that 14 bombs had been set off around Manila, killing 22 people. Although the government blamed the militants, the carnage seemed a blueprint of the bombs Marcos had set off, creating his excuse to implement marshal law... a fact I'd just learned.

I was learning, too, just how much rubbish was taught in high school history. I'll admit it, I wasn't even aware that the Philippines was a US colony. I'd been taught that we Americans didn't *colonize* the Philippines; we *benevolently annexed* them.

Juxtaposing the dam fight against the country's history and recent government, I saw major disparities. Here were an indigenous people who, into the 60s, despite the intrusion of logging and mining, had been trying to maintain their self sufficient lifestyle. Then, barging in came a US supported government insistent on drowning these people's environment with a series of four dams. When the Kalinga protested they were labelled as terrorists and quickly the military was sent in to deal with them. *Terrorists?* I thought 'Let me get this straight; here's authority telling me that my land and house is going to be flooded for my own good and that I'll be placed in a locked compound as retribution *and* if I protest I'm called a terrorist? *Who's the terrorist?* How, as a modern society, can this happen?'

### Mr Toad craving lithium

I flew from Manila to Tuguegarao in northeastern Luzon, then travelled to Tabuk on paved roads with drivers who acted like Mr Toad craving lithium. Countryside whizzed past. Spatial concept was processed in split seconds with objects and oncoming vehicles passing only by inches. Although the driving could have been anywhere Third World, what was being driven was uniquely Filipino, sort of. From the Jeeps of WWII had evolved the Jeepney, a 2 wheel drive stretched Jeep turned minibus decorated to the hilt and crammed with more people than you can get into a soccer stampede. Trying to take my mind off colliding with one of these, I concentrated on watching the countryside but it had no signature look; it contained the rice paddies of Vietnam, then the coastal mountains of California followed by the plateaux and highlands of Kenya, all backdropped by the eucalyptus of Australia. It seemed a reflection of the culture, patchwork. I looked over at Dale. His face was slightly screwed with a sceptical look. I wondered how his head would look mounted on a pole. Would that look remain?

West from Tabuk, scenery and road changed from bland to interesting to spectacular. Up until now we had been on paved roads or, as they are referred to, multipurpose roads. Besides carrying traffic, they are used to spread and dry rice and coffee on, something of which the kids are often in charge. Here, kids' getting jobs doesn't especially mean it will keep them off the streets. Soon our multipurpose road gave way to one that's only purpose seemed to be to shake any vehicle that travelled it quickly to pieces. At least the potholes kept our driver





from racing up it. Country and Western music twanged out from the bus' sound system. For reasons unknown, Filipino bus and truck drivers love Country and Western, far more soothing than the head piercing shrieks of Indian, Pakistani or Indonesian bus music. It was the strange thing about the Philippines, the unsynchronized mix of East and West. I'm not sure what to call it, Wast, I suppose.

Traffic was sparse. The road, paralleling our river, began to climb into the mists where it became not only partially washed out in places but also greasy. Notched into the sides of mountains, the road snaked around gullies and bumped over old WWII rust cancered Bailey bridges with signs warning of five ton capacities. Here it was best not to figure out the maths or listen to Dale pointing out the unbreakable Plexiglas windows, the lack of safety exits and the bus' bald tyres that were often zzzzing in the mud or to David who noticed the closeness of the vehicle in relation to plunging over various cliffs or that from his perch on the roof (a better place from which to leap) he looked over once to see the bus' outside dual hanging in midair, not that a treaded tyre spinning in air would do us any good. Below us was an all but vertical 400 foot plunge into the river that we also noted was low. I would have preferred to see the water there than on the road. At least Clint Black would be singing to us on our way down.

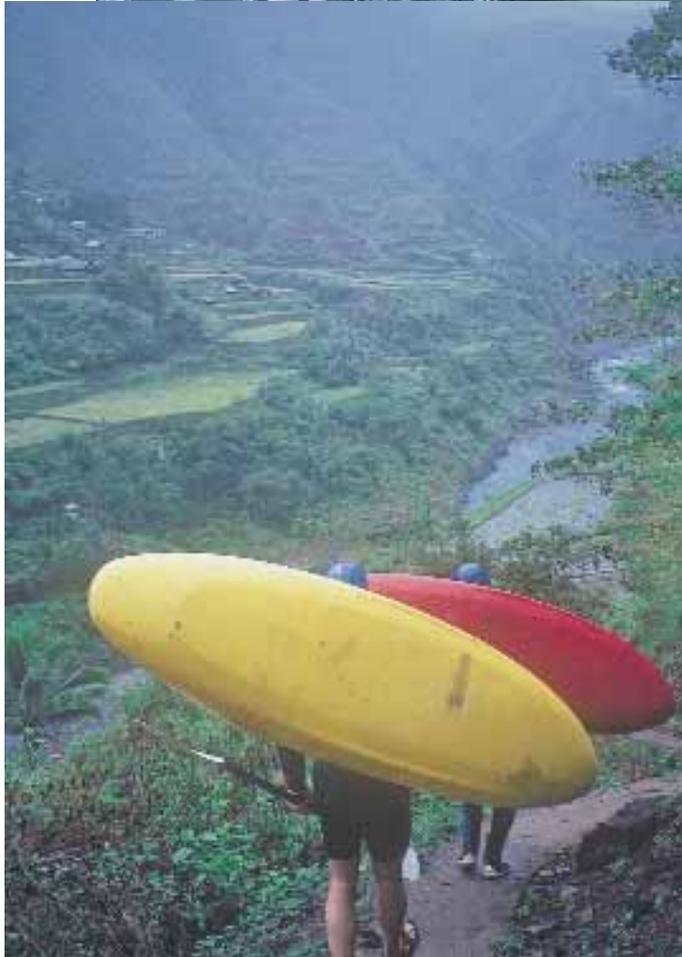
By mid afternoon we had reached Lubuagan, the heart of Kalinga country. The town seemed proportionately large for the rugged country in which it nestled. Mists welled up from the unseen river below, unveiling hundreds of terraced rice paddies pocketing the hillsides. It was as if the entire land was floating on a fog. My camera,

though, wasn't interested; my slow speed film didn't take to the shrouded dark green scenery. Even the patchwork of the almost neon green new rice paddies didn't encourage my light meter.

By bus Lubuagan was a major task to reach. The same journey on foot or horse was tough to imagine. At first glance, fighting and holding such an obscure and uneven piece of real estate seems doubtful and absurd until the resource richness of the land is punched into the equation.

An hour and a half later, 18 kilometres after our road squiggled back down to the river, we arrived at Tinlayan, our base. Hosted by Fernando, the mayor, we stayed in his guesthouse, being treated the next morning to a wake up call of a pig being butchered outside our window and, as if this didn't possess enough waking capability, the stench of the hair being singed off the animal certainly did, not that I needed anymore waking than I'd already had; the rats crawling over my bed all night had already done a thorough job of that. This revelation, though, paled in comparison with the next. At lunch we learned that, although they may look alike, there is a distinct difference in taste between onion rings and water buffalo, caribao, intestines cut into Os (which of course led to the saying 'I'm so hungry I could eat the back end out of a caribao!' not to mention a later favourite 'She was the best dog I ever had!'). Ironically, caribao milk is not used. It's taboo.

There were other surprises also, like Fernando's toilet. It was a small seatless bowl, too high to squat over but, if it had possessed a seat, too low to sit on, nor did the bowl look capable of being stood on.



Although I never figured it out I didn't complain. It was better than the toilets that were to be butchered under our window each morning. Soon after, while visiting one of the outlying villages, I asked my host to direct me to the toilet. He pointed to the door and said 'Outside. Running.'

'Running water?' I asked, trying to fill in his meaning.

'No,' he laughed. 'Running pig.'

Other than the antique wooden shield hanging on Fernando's wall above the TV there was little else in Tinglayan I could discern that distinguished the Kalinga culture from any other isolated peoples in the world being homogenized into the world's colourless melting pot. With TV and radios and daily buses and Jeepneys running in and out of the mountains, their traditions seemed a lot more watered down than the tourist industry would wish people to believe. Although these people carried on tribal wars long before the MacDonaldis and the Cambells even wore kilts, large hostilities between villages are rare. The headhunting card is overplayed. Allegedly, the last head was taken several decades ago. (If it was a trophy, Boone and Crockett never heard of it.) The purpose of taking heads was to instill just that extra bit of fear in your enemy to make them think twice about messing with you. Officially, the practice stopped at the beginning of the 1900s.

### Nescafé instant while surrounded by drying coffee beans

Wanting to talk with the people about the war, I was taken to a house where I was to meet 'someone who will answer all your question.' Sitting on an elevated porch that was a third the size of the house, I was served coffee. Despite being surrounded by coffee plants and drying beans, I was handed a cup of Nescafé instant.

A stream of visitors came and went. Everyone shot the breeze, some in the native language but most in very good English. I hadn't a clue whom I was to meet. I steered the conversation to the dam. Someone said 'You see, we could not trust the government then so we had to fight.'

'Do you trust them now?' I asked.

There was a heavy silence as faces looked about at each other. I'd said the wrong thing. A man with piercing eyes who had sat next to me the whole time but had said very little began haphazardly dragging the tip of the twig back and forth on the floor in front of him. Finally he said, 'We won't answer that.'

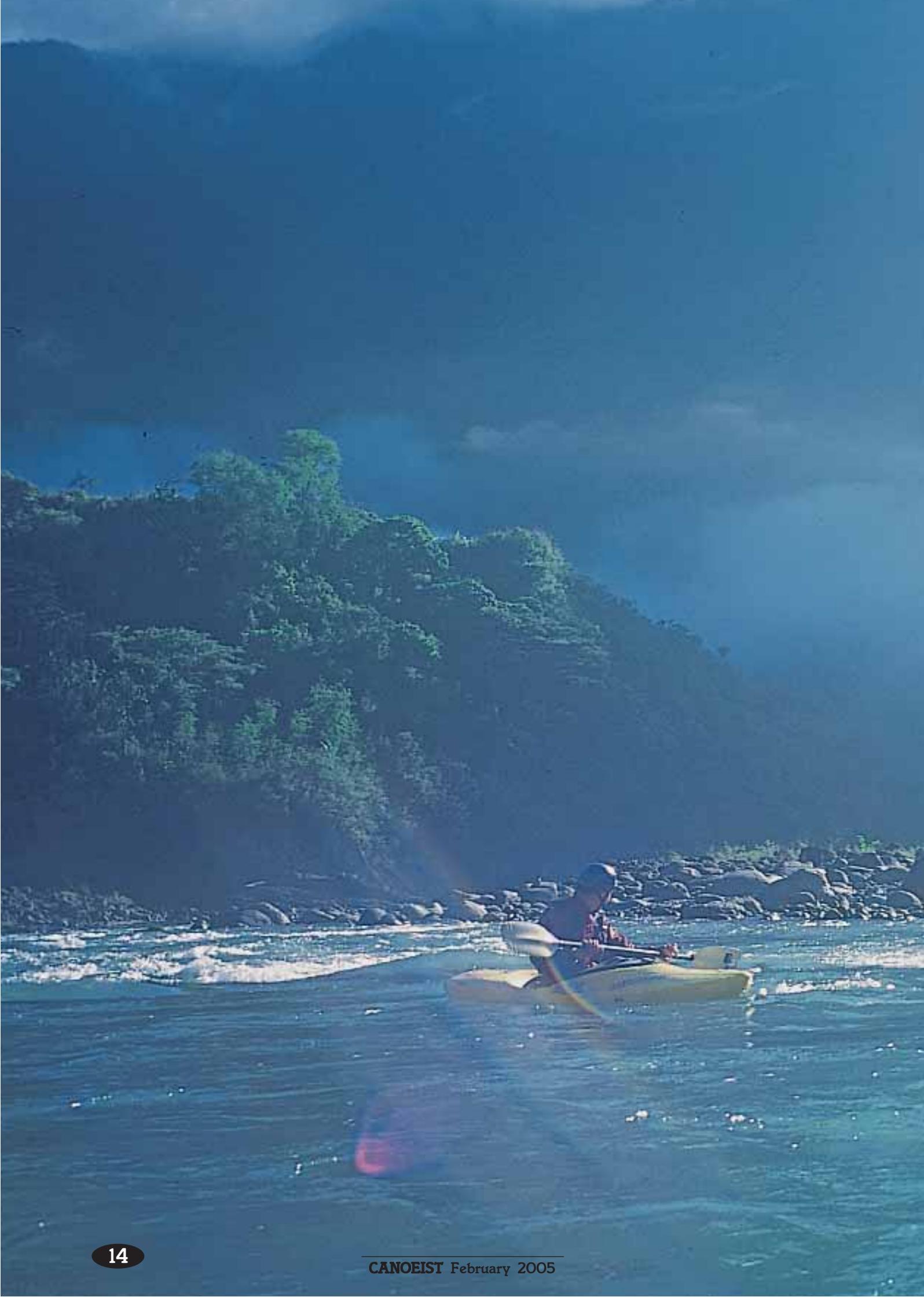
Opening my mouth to change feet, I questioned 'Why not?'

He let out a slight sadistic laugh. 'Because we *are* the government now.'

His name was Miguel Atumba. He introduced himself as Macli-ing Dulag's spokesman. The path to his village was one straight up a mountain, a shortcut across what otherwise should have been about several million switchbacks. Dripping sweat, sucking air, I wondered how the attackers of one of these perched villages had the energy to carry on a grudge, let alone fight. Currently there was a dispute between Miguel's village and the one they faced of equal elevation across the river. The bodong hadn't been settled and, later, when I asked Miguel if the bolos, a machete, the traditional weapon, was still used, he answered, 'Only on pigs,' but then, nodding across the valley, added 'And for those people. They are very bad people.'

I stayed with Miguel until the following day. He shared with me his house, his hospitality and the report he'd written on events leading up to Macli-ing's assassination.









### Power of the handcuff knot

As it turned out, what was supposed to be a two week visit to the area turned out to be a mere week. I was only to spend two days on the river. For three days while I travelled about the hills, Dave and Dale ran their swiftwater rescue clinic. Returning back to Fernando's they filled me in. Instead of instructing just raft guides, they opened it to the community. Their classroom overflowed. Although water was the Kalingas' lifeblood, they viewed the Chico as a tolerated evil. Then again, we weren't seeing the river in monsoon, a time of frequent drownings. Nor were the questions fielded run of the mill, like how to run a Z drag on a caribao stuck in the mud or even how to protect oneself in quicksand. People who had never swum in their lives put buoyancy aids on and bobbed through the rapids but, most revealing, women returned to their villages, smiling with new found power, the handcuff knot.

When we did finally get to run the river we put in at Bugnay. Just below the village, gazing up from the bottom of the wedge shaped canyon, I thought I could at least understand the temptation of the dam designers. The location was love without the fine print. There was not much to plug, the canyon slopes all connivingly angled steeply to the river. Tall and narrow, the dam would back up miles of river... Damless, however, the encompassing canyon was fantastic. As we headed off downriver kids ran down the short beach, following us until a cliff stopped them.

At our water level some of the drops were bonepickers but most funnelled enough water, gaining my respect. The Chico's float season runs from July to mid January, optimum levels being from August to December.

The water was warm but with the sun playing dodge ball with the mists, a short wetsuit was preferable. Without much water there were few waves to catch yet I didn't care. Gary assured me of incredible

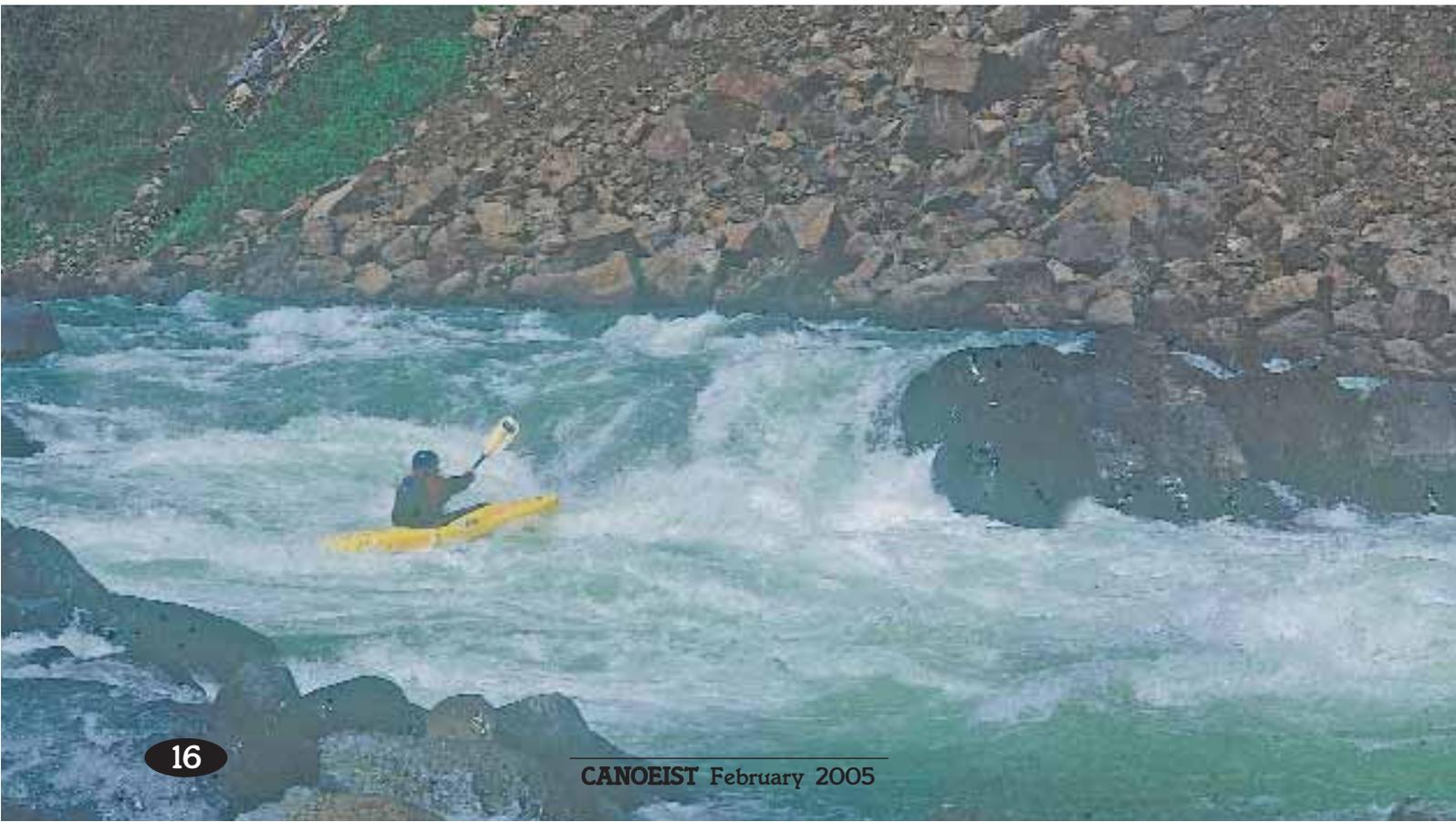
surfing when typhoons blew through and I'm sure there is but this was hardly a king sized riverbed and the price of surfing such a swollen river would be the cauliflowering and sucking swirls below. Normal levels during monsoon season peg from 10,000 to 30,000 cfs but with a monster typhoon the stage on this section can swell to a mindnumbing 50,000 cfs, doubling that number just a handful of miles downstream where the Pasil River adds its weight. These were storms that erased the suspension bridges presently thirty - forty feet above us.

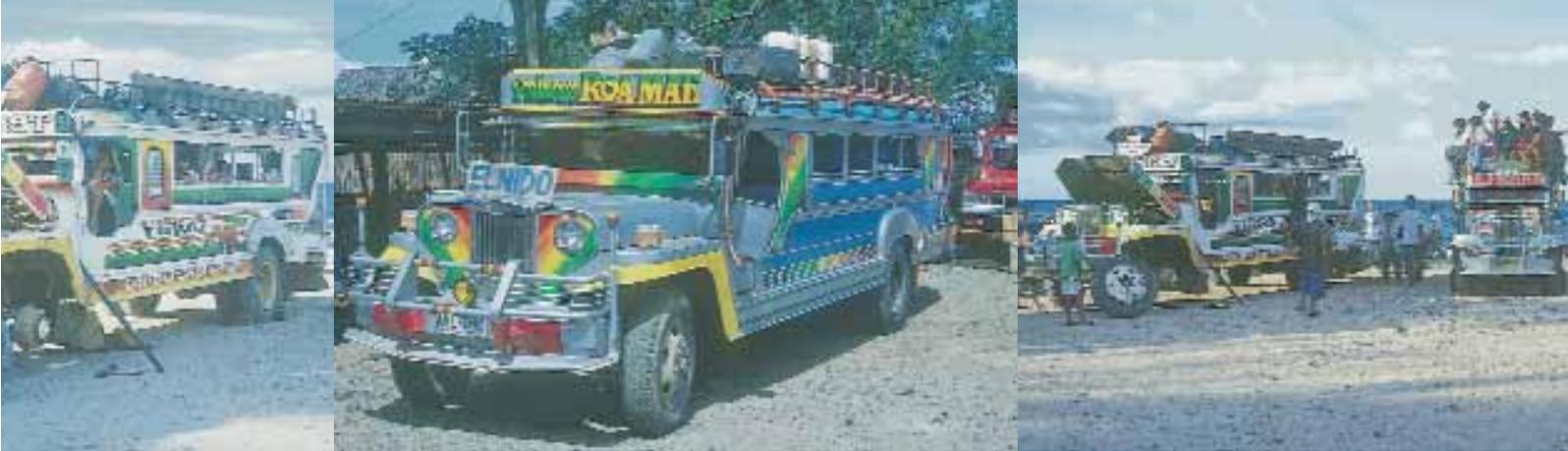
The water was clear; in monsoon it runs a mudladen brown. I couldn't help but wonder hadn't the German dam designers taken the silt into account? On our bus ride into the mountains we had seen the Abulug dam near Tabuk. It had taken the mudladen monsoon floods a mere twenty years to silt in its reservoir. I wondered why the issue wasn't addressed with these upstream dams. Was it *that* quick a scheme just to skim multinational contractors and milk the World Bank?

Flanking the river, slopes were either covered in a knife like grass or crops like coffee and bananas and palms and a plethora of other plants. I also noted marijuana. Although illegal (a sign at Manila airport warns that drug offences are punished by death), marijuana has become an alternative cash crop. According to Miguel, the plant was unknown in the Philippines until the 60s when the NPA polarized and swelled in rank as a natural reaction to Marcos' behaviour. Needing money for weapons, they began growing dope, then traded the military for arms in turn to shoot them. Currently, the price for an M-16 is five kilograms of grass.

We took out at Tinglayan and returned to the river two days later. This time we took one of the local guides, Roger. He paddled an inflatable kayak. A few miles downstream of Tinglayan the river left the road but not the sporadic villages dotting the slopes. Jagged outlines of terraces stair stepped up the hillsides into the clouds.

Between terraces were hostile gullies of steepness smothered in thick

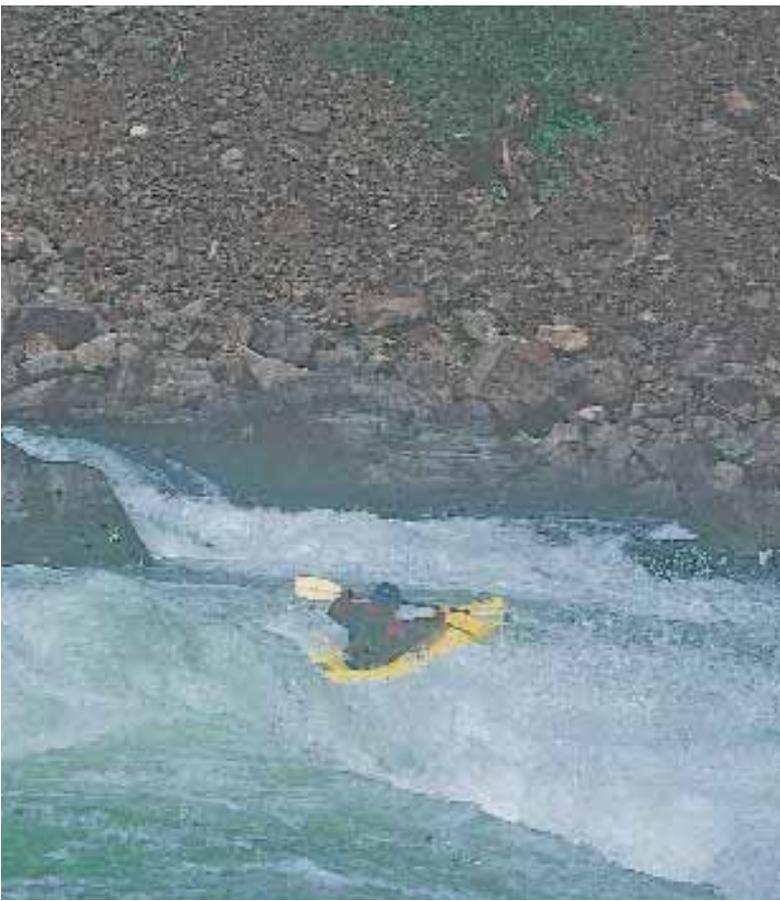




jungle. Occasionally the vein like branches of some stately tree, like an acacia, rose above the general canopy but all else was a green nondescript disturbance of high density housing for a whole lot of biology, places out of which not to walk. Looking up at these green impenetrable walls, I was certain that the last rivers on Earth to be explored would be in the tropics. In these places it would be easier to drop over unrunnable waterfalls than to climb out of the gorge. It was the Philippines where the last Japanese soldier, hiding out in such jungle, didn't quit WW2 until 1972. (A note to the current generation: He did it *without* any ammo.)

In this section there were drops that were worth scouting and a drop I wish I'd scouted. Coming into a sharp righthand bend, I watched David pinball from sight down a boulder choked chute. The other plausible route was far right where I headed but not fast enough. Instead, I was dropped over a five foot ledge, the drop standing me on end before sloughing me upside down. Rolling up, I quickly motioned Roger, in an inflatable kayak, right but he didn't even make the ledge upright, nor did I see him go over it. All I saw was his boat. Roger vanished. He probably hadn't disappeared more than twenty seconds but underwater seconds are deliberated in dog time. Finally, popping up smiling, he exclaimed. 'I was in a cave. I couldn't get out.'

We passed the confluence of the Pasil, the river we were going to run the next day, but fate in the form of one more big drop had other plans for us. In this rapid the currents vectored in a large X in front of an even larger hole. The key was to start left and end right. Missing the line was not an option because the hole was going to render us into something similar to the Kalinga culinary delight 'killing me softly'. For this a chicken is knocked unconscious, whacked all over with a spoon, tenderizing its meat, then at last killed which isn't what happened to Gary. While scouting the drop he slipped and broke his ankle.



Using tape and cut up plastic water bottles, David stabilized the leg. Even though the road had joined the Chico at the Pasil, it was with us only in spirit; too far up the hillside to yard Gary up, we could only shoehorn him into his kayak to let him paddle himself out. After shuttling Gary back to Manila we were too worn to return to the mountains.

### Being where God is

In one of my interviews I wanted a gauge of the current Kalinga culture's health so I visited Sapi Bawer, a cultural enthusiast in Lubuagan. His house was a museum, its walls adorned with spears, shields, weavings, beadwork, strange musical instruments and pictures of Kalinga in costume, dancing. Due to political pressure he'd recently been forced to resign as principal of the Catholic Mission School but he was happy for now he pursued his passion full time, keeping the culture on track. At school for part of the curriculum, he pushed to teach native dance and music to the kids. To the conservative priests it was heresy but the liberals encouraged him. He was delighted that it had caused such a rift 'Because,' he explained, 'that way I know I have them all thinking. Always they have called us pagan and no good. What are we to think of ourselves when they teach us such things? How do we begin to think of ourselves?'

'Why do you insist,' I asked, 'on carrying on the argument of teaching dance and music within the church?'

'I'll admit. I have radical ideas. I say these things outside the church; no-one listens. Christianity is part of us now, too. We have not accepted all of it because if we did it would be an institution. Kaboniyon, God, they say he is in the church on Sunday. That is an institution. They want all the children there but they are not happy. They should be outside in the fresh air with their parents planting rice. There they are happy. That is where God is.'

In the morning we walked where God was up amongst the rice paddies and where Sapi had built a traditional hut. He came here often to play music and relax and write down his thoughts. As we walked along he began picking up rice seedlings that someone had carelessly dropped. Stooping down, burying his arms in mud he would plant them. As he did so he said how he thought the people were losing touch with the land. Yes, Filipinos were the most highly educated of all people in Asia but what good did that do? 'We are an imprisoned people to a future that does not exist. We need more hands on. We need to go back to the land so people appreciate where they came from. Why do we have the military? It is one of the few places a young person can go. Yet what good is it? If Indonesia attacks us, we cannot defend ourselves. The military only harasses the people.'

Sapi's idea was to dump all the military funds into an agricultural programme instead, something positive, like maintaining the rice terraces, increasing food production, planting mahogany seedlings for the future. Throwing up his hands he says 'Manila is more important to the politician. Why maintain the countryside? But it is us who supplies them with food. They demand more and more but in return they give us less.'

'What if they try again to build the dams?'

'If it comes down to living with crocodiles or having to fight to death, well, that is not a choice. We will fight. It is too bad. We are innocent but that is what we must die for. We will never be crocodiled!'

**Whit Deschner**

[Click here to read a brief history of the Philippines in general and the Chico River's dams in particular.](#)



# BOOKS

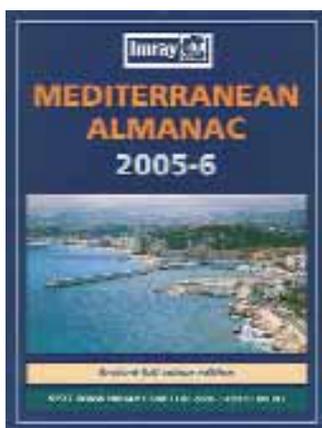
## Reviews of new books and publications

### Mediterranean Almanac 2005 - 6

Rod Heikell and Lucinda Michell  
0 85288 777 9  
Jan 2005  
427 pages  
£27.50

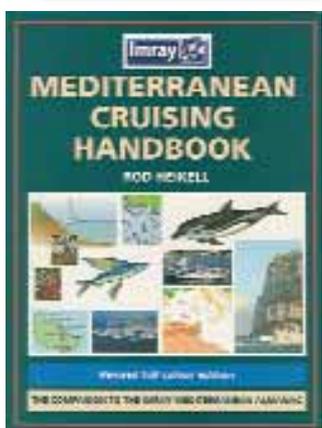
### Mediterranean Cruising Handbook

Rod Heikell  
Imray Laurie Norie & Wilson  
Ltd, Wych House, St Ives, Cambs  
PE27 5BT  
0 85288 778 7  
5th edition, Dec 2004  
280 x 210mm  
195 pages, paperback  
£14.95



Until now these have been a single volume but the decision has been made to split the almanac (with its data which changes from year to year) from the handbook (with information which does not change so quickly). Indeed, the almanac will have a 2006 supplement to be published free in November. Both are in full colour and cover from the Bosphorus to the Atlantic island groups, quite a generous interpretation of the titles.

Two thirds of the almanac relates to harbours, really more useful to yachtsmen although there are many chartlets and there can be some useful information on such details as local weather, where to find water and provisions and the attitudes of the locals with some countries being suggested as better avoided. The section on regulations and documentation can imply where extra care is needed and there is no harm in knowing about



radio services, weather forecasts, navigation lights and safety and distress issues. Charts from various sources are listed and compared and tide tables are given for Gibraltar with constants for elsewhere. Although there is very limited tidal range over most of the Mediterranean there can be some significant tidal currents between islands. Some of these are wind induced and the blows are described in detail with their strengths and timings. Marine reserves are detailed with their restrictions.

'Yachting pilot books and guides often contain a large amount of information unrelated to finding and getting into harbours or anchorages: information about the history and customs of a place, about its character and "feel", the local industry and agriculture, cuisine, the sort of things that might attract one there in preference to another place or that might be interesting anyway. If such books don't, they should'. So says the second book which is rather more readable and descriptive. It covers much of the same ground but also looks at the history (of which there is a vast amount around this sea) and the marine life (including the dangerous creatures). There is a seven language dictionary and a section on first aid. Finally, there is a country by country analysis with everything from the politics, disputes, currency, languages, ethnic groups and national holidays to pollution, travel arrangements, whether the post and telephones work and the

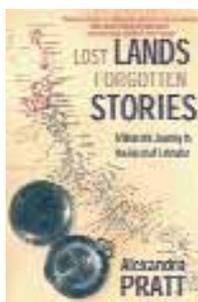
reliability of the medical services. Geography includes winds, waterspouts, thunderstorms and volcanic activity and there is guidance on charts and pilots. In addition to chartlets, this book also has photographs.

Some snippets of information include the fact that boats no longer need to monitor Channel 16, the emergency channel, and 121MHz for EPIRBs is to be phased out in Feb 2009. At up to £3,000 per set, the Automatic Identification System is too expensive for all except the larger boats on which it is now compulsory but we have the prospect of a cheaper receive only version being developed which will, at least, have the benefit of advising when to break out the white flares. You may also wish to note that ginger is often beneficial for sea sickness sufferers.

Unlike the package holiday trade, British canoeists have yet to discover the Mediterranean in any numbers. These two books will help with some basic information on this new territory.

### Lost Lands Forgotten Stories

Alexandra Pratt  
Eye Books, 51 Boscombe Rd, London  
W12 9HT  
1 903070 36 8  
Jan 2005  
200 x 130mm  
259 pages, paperback.  
£9.99



In 1903 young Leonidas Hubbard led an expedition to cross part of Labrador and Québec by canoe. Things went wrong and he starved to death although his partner was rescued after their guide went to fetch help. Allegations were made about the behaviour of the two expeditioners as to which had caused the fatal ending. Two years later, Mina Hubbard, the widow of Leonidas, set out with four native guides and two canoes to prove that the trip could be done as her husband had claimed. She succeeded, taking two months less than a rival expedition at the same time by her husband's former partner.

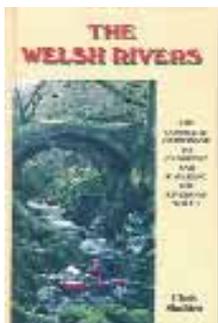
The story has become folk history in Labrador. Alexandra Pratt of Cornwall came across it in the 1990s. In 2000, accompanied by a single Innu guide and just one canoe and armed with Mina's notes, she set out to retrace the journey. This is the story of that attempt.

There are virtually no pictures and the maps are more ornamental than useful but the writing is stunning. There were times when I caught myself glancing ahead for clues as I could not read the text fast enough. Always there is the race against Mina and who had got furthest in a given time, a race tempered by the dwindling number of pages remaining in the book, leading towards an unexpected finish.

Mina's diary is quoted on a range of topics which surface again during this modern trip. What begins as an adventure travel book gradually changes in tone, though, as the author gets to know her guide and learn about Innu issues, particularly the exploitation of their lands for power and minerals and the problems of their being driven from a nomadic hunting lifestyle in recent decades to living in houses with alcoholism and such issues. 'The Innu and others like them exist at the margins of the "developed" world, just as we are at the margins of theirs... The trails I've followed since have led not just deep into the country, but, unexpectedly, deep into a place of ideas and myths, language and histories that are the real expedition.' How many of us wanting to take our recreation in the outdoors are reaching back to a lifestyle from which the Innu have only recently been forced? It is easy to laugh at Big Foot and the spirit world yet I was intrigued by the mysterious shaking tent spirits which sound so similar to the whistling ghosts of the Gilbert Islands, half a world away, reported sceptically by Arthur Grimble in his 1952 book *A Pattern of Islands*.

This is a book which draws attention to the aspirations of the people through whose land the journey is made and should be read as a reminder of the principle. Primarily about past and present expeditions by lone women and their guides, it also draws attention to some gender issues which might be overlooked by males or in larger groups.

The final paragraph sums up the book. I believe she has succeeded in her aims in what is an excellent read. I hope I have told the real story of this trip, this place called Labrador. I found it not in the rivers, achingly cold and clear, or the ancient valleys, or the endless hills. I found it instead in the hearts and minds of the people who live there, the Innu and Canadian alike. It was they who made this expedition successful and worthwhile - a true journey, irrespective of our final destination.

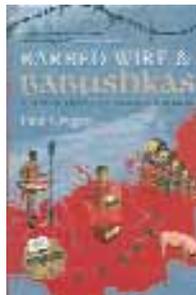


### Welsh guide online

Rights to Chris Sladden's *The Welsh Rivers* have been bought by the WCA who are now publishing it online. Find it at [www.canoewales.com](http://www.canoewales.com).

### Book baggage

Coinciding with the launch of his book *Barbed Wire & Babushkas* (Jan, p27), Paul Grogan and partner in crime



Richard Boddington have appeared on Radio 4's travel programme *Excess Baggage*. They were talking about their descent of the Amur which flows from Mongolia to the Pacific.

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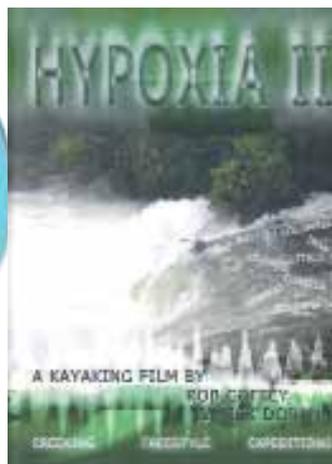
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### Hypoxia II

Rob Coffey & Nick Doran  
44 mins

From [www.hypoxia2.com](http://www.hypoxia2.com)

Before I start, I just love the label on this DVD, the best I have ever seen, so smooth.

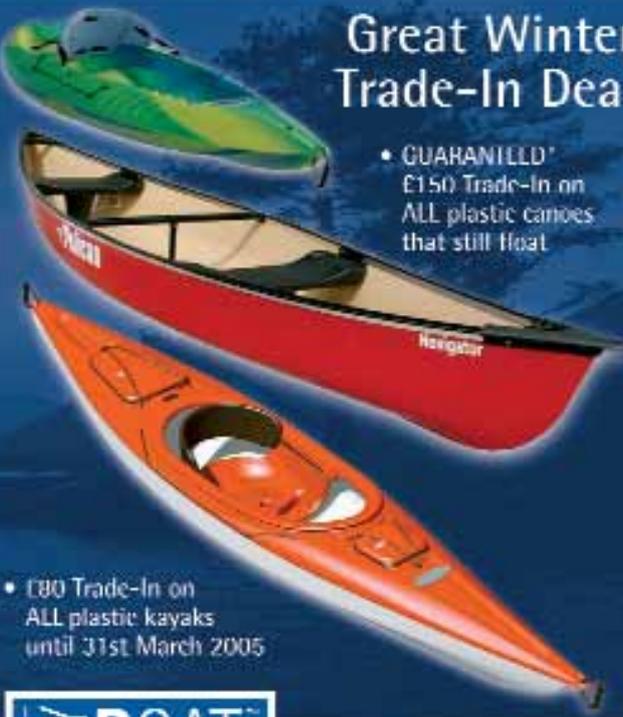
This is the film diary of 2003, a year of extreme white water globetrotting by Irish paddlers Rob Coffey, Nick Doran, Dave Carroll and Ali Donald plus a small army of international friends met along the way, nearly a short film, as it turned out.

There are many big drops but this is not a sanitized film. The failures are there as well as the successes. In Italy there was a lot of desperate use of ropes and then, in Switzerland, Rob broke his back and was carried away on a stretcher dangling on a rope below a helicopter to begin 3 months in a back brace while the rest of the team attempted to dodge the police, attracted to the activity on this illegal road.

Hospital sentence served, activity began again with some warm up falls in Corsica before joining Dave Manby and friends in Iran for some serious rock climbing with boats, a wrist injury and an attack by robbers. British Columbia's steep creeks were tame by comparison but then came the Hypoxia of the title on Uganda's White Nile. Some of the world's top freestylers were showing what they could do on a world standard rapid before degenerating into a boat throwing competition. After an interlude in Norway it was back to Africa for a run on the Blue Nile in Ethiopia, during which a significant face wound was received, courtesy of a rock thrower.

The film is not all blood and guts, however. Big fall fans will certainly not be disappointed and it is good to see the Irish making the running this time. Any serious global white water paddler will find some familiar venues here.

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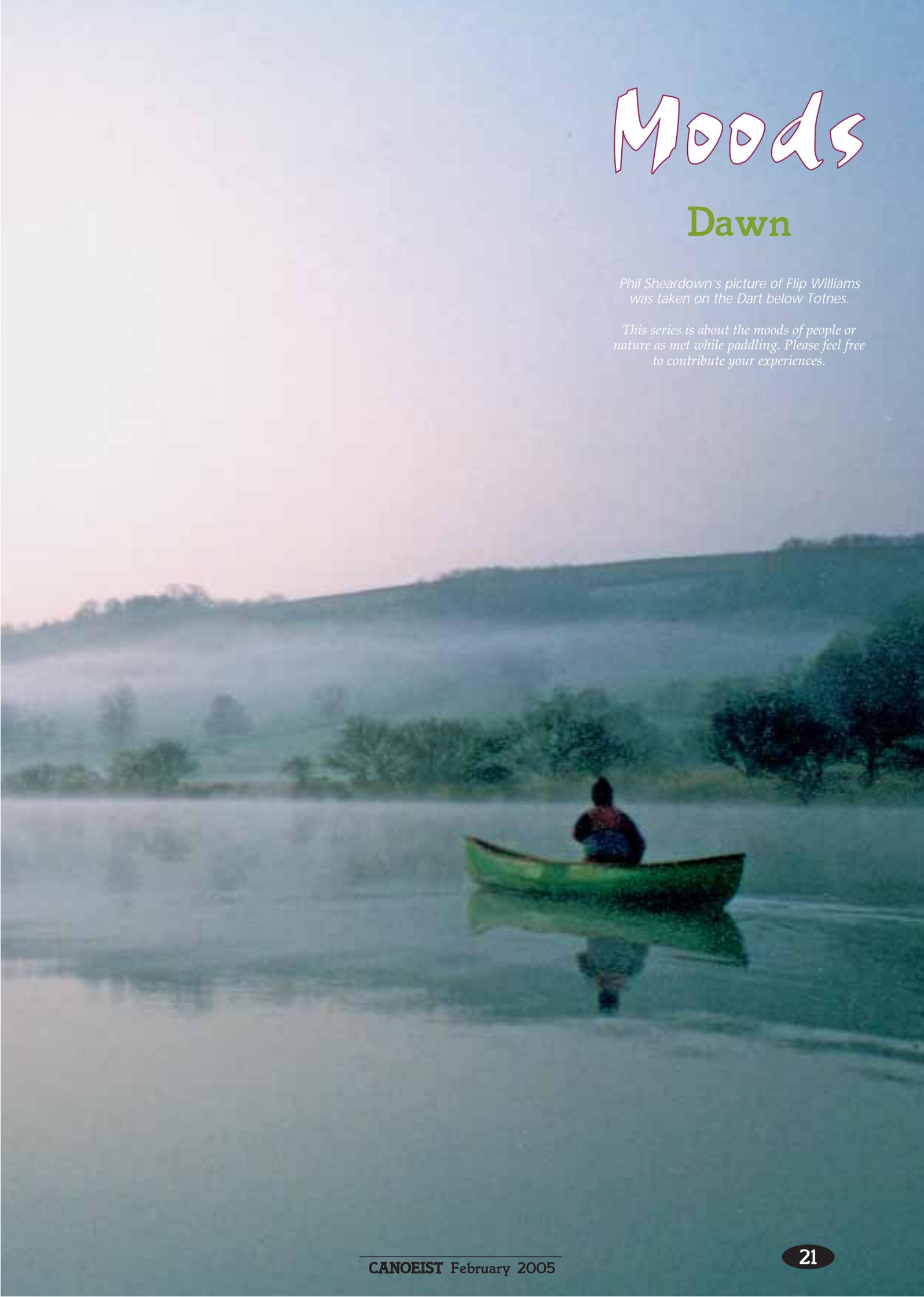


# Moods

## Dawn

*Phil Sheardown's picture of Flip Williams was taken on the Dart below Totnes.*

*This series is about the moods of people or nature as met while paddling. Please feel free to contribute your experiences.*



# Not the *ideal* paddling location



*Philip, Axel and a sailing boat in the Solent.*

For those of us who are interested in sea kayaks, the southeast of England isn't the ideal paddling location. If you have paddled in Scotland, Wales and the West Country, the heavily built up coastline and the huge numbers of ships, yachts, gin palaces and jet skis can be the source of much irritation.

We do, however, have some spectacular sections of coastline and headlands that produce interesting conditions for kayaking. The Isle of Wight and the Solent are one of these places. Apart from visiting the island when my children were small and taking open top buses to the usual tourist haunts, I had never been there until summer 2004. For years the club of which I was a member had discussed the possibilities of making the crossing but there were always too many obstacles thrown up and it never happened.

I leapt at the chance of doing a circumnavigation over a long weekend in July. The Romans called the island *Vectis*. The Anglo Saxons used *Withe ealond* and in the Middle Ages there were further variations such as *Wicht* and *Whyht*. It is believed that the island was formed as recently as 7,000 years ago when the sea levels began to rise as the icecaps retreated. The derivation of the name could be connected to the Welsh *gwaith* (work) and the Latin *vectis* (lever). Wight could mean '*what has been raised above the sea*'

We set off from Calshot Activities Centre at about 2pm on Friday. There were ten of us in total with one double and the rest of us in single kayaks. The weekend weather forecast was good with little wind expected and many of us were paddling in light thermals. We crossed the Solent at Stansore Point and kept close to the channel to take advantage of the tide. It was a good day for sunglasses and sunscreen. To our left was Newtown Bay with its river and village. Newtown was once the island's capital and ships of all sizes used the river as a harbour. The Romans sacked the town and in 1377 the French burnt it to the ground. One of the few buildings remaining is the Old Town Hall. The National Trust now owns most of the adjoining land. It is one of the few unspoilt estuaries on the island and large numbers of seabirds nest and feed on the marshland.

*Leaving the Needles.*



*A circumnavigation of the Isle of Wight*





*The Needles lighthouse.*

A little later we had a leg stretch at Alum Bay. Although the beach looks a bit like an industrial site, the multi coloured sands have an interesting pedigree and were originally laid down millions of years ago before massive movements of the Earth's surface upended the sandstone, shale and clay strata. The chairlift appeared to be slowly moving but there were few people on the beach. This was just as well for those of us needing to find a convenient rock. In 1897 Marconi sent the first wireless transmission from Alum Bay and a monument to him stands on the clifftop above the beach.

We soon reached the Needles but there was little interesting water to be had by those seeking excitement. The original lighthouse was built on the cliffs overlooking Scratchell's Bay in 1785 but its light was frequently obscured by fog. Trinity House built a new 109 ft lighthouse that is perched on the most westerly rock of the Needles group. It started working on 1st January 1859 and was built of granite. Cellars and storehouses were excavated in the chalk bedrock. The lighthouse was automated in 1994.

On the site of the old Needles Battery was a top secret space rocket and missile development centre. It operated between 1955 and 1971 and they developed the Black Arrow and Black Night rockets. In 1971 the only all British satellite was launched into orbit by a Black Night rocket. It should stay there until about 2200.

## Race and overfalls

During the night a couple of fishermen shared the beach with us but they had gone by the early hours. Dawn came and, as the sun rose over the cliffs, we started to warm up nicely. Soon there was a multicoloured array of clothes and other kit drying out on the beach. The public toilets didn't open until 9am and the café until 10am and, as we were hoping to leave about 09.30 to take advantage of the tide, those people who wanted the luxury of a café breakfast were disappointed.

Between Freshwater Bay and St Catherine's Point the Military Road runs parallel to the coast. It was built during the late nineteenth century with barracks at either end and had been constructed at the same time as numerous forts because of a perceived threat from the French. It was never needed and groups of bikers apparently now use it as an unofficial race track. We passed numerous chines (local name, where a stream has cut through solid rock) although on these southwestern shores they are bare of vegetation. On the southeastern seaboard, some, such as Shanklin Chine, are rich with exotic plants that grow in their unique microclimate. Blackgang Chine, which is about 2km from St Catherine's Point, is a popular place for fossil hunters.

St Catherine's Point Lighthouse, which is on the southernmost



*Freshwater Bay at dawn.*

The late afternoon sun reflected off the chalk cliffs below Tennyson Down and there were a number of small caves along this stretch of coast. We made good time to Freshwater Bay and headed for the eastern side of the beach. It must be a common occurrence for groups of kayakers to bivi on the beach as none of the fine people of Freshwater Bay told us to shove our hooks. One of the problems of paddling in the southeast is that we are never too far away from people. For paddlers who yearn for the wild outdoors of Scotland and its numerous islands it can be a little disheartening. We arrived about 8pm and set to cooking supper (or, in my case, having pitta bread and cheese etc). I eat a lot of fresh fruit and vegetables and, with the good forecast for the weekend, had decided against cooking. As long as I could boil up hot water for tea I would survive a weekend on the hospitable IoW. After eating, some of us went for a swift half or two at the local hotel. Considering we were there during the peak summer period, the bars were very quiet. If there were large quantities of driftwood on the beach and we were in some remote part of Scotland, no doubt we would have got a fire blazing, got the whisky out and told stories of epic paddles in horrendous conditions but we weren't so, rather than sit around in the dark, most of us got the bivi bags out, rolled out the Thermarest mats and got into our sleeping bags.

extremity of the island, is used by the Met Office as a weather reporting station. The race off the point flows at about 5 knots on spring tides and with wind against tide there are significant overfalls with which to contend. We were passing through with a several knot stream in our favour and it was good to be in some moving water. Some of the group opted for a less turbulent ride close to shore. The present lighthouse at St Catherine's was built in 1838. The lantern was frequently capped in mist so, in 1875, the elevation of the light was lowered by 13 metres. This did little to improve its appearance. The lighthouse was automated in 1997.

We stopped to have a quick lunchbreak at Reeth Bay, which is an attractive little beach just west of St Catherine's Point. It was decided to press on to take advantage of the good conditions and to possibly set our sights on an overnight stay at Whitecliff Bay. This part of the island is more highly populated and we were rarely far away from built up areas. We passed Shanklin Chine, which was chosen as one of several places for the highly secret PLUTO or Pipe Line Under The Ocean project. These pipes were delivering fuel to allied forces in France by August 1944 and by the spring of 1945 were delivering over 1 million gallons a day. The pipeline consisted of over 500 miles of pipe and pumping stations were disguised as shops or houses.



*Reeth Bay lunch stop.*

When we arrived at Whitecliff Bay we were spoilt for choice (two) regarding local hostelries. There were also a couple of small cafés on the beach, one of which did some mean sandwiches and rolls, but they had closed by the time I had sorted myself out. The nearest toilets were at the campsite pub and the staff were not too fazed by a column of kayakers in bush pants and Hellys filling up their water containers. We set up camp on the eastern side of the beach. Behind was a low crumbling cliff of multicoloured sand that formed the opposite end of the coloured sand strata of Alum Bay. The nearest pub served breakfasts although, yet again, not quite early enough for our needs. Several of the group walked up to the pub on Culver Down but they didn't stay too long. Still, it was good exercise and they probably slept better for it. During the early evening, hordes of children and a few adults came down to the beach to play some games but they were far enough away not to disturb our tranquillity.



*Sunrise from Whitecliff Bay*

## Playing with the new toy

Dawn was spectacular. Flashes of yellow, orange and golden light broke through the clouds and reflected off the ripple free sea. I tried not to wake anyone as I brewed my first cup of tea and took a few pictures. By 09.30am we had left and we soon reached Bembridge Ledges, a limestone outcrop that has claimed many ships over the centuries. We stopped for a pee break at St Helen's Fort. This listed Ancient Monument, unlike the other Solent forts, has its own beach at low water. It was constructed in 1870 and has an artesian well water supply. It was sold by the Crown Estates in 1982 and has planning permission for conversion to a private residence. We made good progress to Ryde Sand where we crossed the channel to Gilkicker Point. It's an interesting experience to have yachts and powerboats coming from all directions, not to mention the additional problems of high speed ferries and hovercraft. We got to the other side without so much as a near miss and made for the shore at GAFIRS in Stokes Bay.

We had a restful and amusing lunch, watching the antics of a group trying out what appeared to be their new toy. It was a small motorboat and the slight swell didn't make it easy for them.

Time to move on, we had some help from the tide but faced a headwind which must have been blowing force 5 for the rest of the journey to Calshot. We paddled parallel to the shore and were well away from the larger craft although we had windsurfers and kitesurfers all around us adjacent to Lee-on-the-Solent. Some of these surfers were very talented and did some amazing tricks in what was a particularly strong wind. After a tiring couple of hours of almost constant paddling we finally got back to Calshot just before the centre closed for the day. It wasn't until I looked in a mirror a bit later on that I realised why I was getting some strange looks. My face had a thin crust of salt on it from the invigorating paddle against the wind.

Thanks to Philip Chapple for planning and leading the trip on behalf of SESK. The weather was great, the paddling interesting and the company amenable.

**Tony Sandry** is a member of the International Sea Kayak Association and paddled with Philip Chapple, Jackie Leslie, Dave Bagshaw, Rob and Alf Strickland, Axel Evers, Tony Jackson, John Edney and Steve Williams.



Whitecliff Bay, still in the early morning.

Eventually it was launched from the trailer and, after much messing around, they got the outboard going. Unfortunately, it soon stopped and then started several times before spluttering to a halt in a cloud of smoke. By now the wind was getting up to a fresh breeze; they were about 200 metres out and were being blown down the Solent. Then the cavalry arrived in the form of a group of jet skiers. These noble cowboys of the sea offered the couple in the boat a friendly tow to the shore. They readily agreed but were determined to use their own towline rather than be claimed as salvage by the aforementioned heroes. When they were within wading distance of the beach the good Samaritans cast off the rope and sped off into the sunset in search of other lost souls. It wasn't, however, over for the unlucky pair as their shore party had great difficulty in pulling the boat onto their trailer. The wind had got up and the waves came close to beaching the boat against the concrete slipway on several occasions. After at least 20 minutes of wrestling with the boat and trailer and almost reversing their car into the sea, they finally succeeded in getting the boat onto the trailer and off the slipway. We weren't alone in having grins like Cheshire cats.

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## Weirwolf reduce boatbuilding

Iain Hutchison is to drop most of his boatbuilding in the face of health problems. He will still do some work on his sailing trimarans and will continue to offer plans but day to day canoe building is not to continue. [01594 826273]

## Environmental horn

Ever watched somebody shaking a hand held horn in order to get the last squawk from it? The Ecoblast at £19.95 works by compressed air and can be recharged with the pump supplied or filled up using a tyre compressor. It is also said to be louder than comparable hooters. [01932 244396]

## Across the Andes

Adventure-Whitewater are running four 15 day trips in the Andes this year, the first starting on Apr 9th. The trip has a broad mix of hiking, boat journey on Lake Titicaca, rafting and inflatable canoeing on the Urubamba and such Pervian activities as watching condors and visiting the ruins of Machu Picchu. The trip costs £1,350 including internal flights but not travel to Peru. [0870 443 0240]

## John Cockram sells Performance Kayaks

John Cockram is selling Performance Kayaks to Richard Walter and Denise Charman on 1st Mar. Richard and Dizzy know the business well and will continue to trade from the current address in Weston super Mare. Although John will still be involved in canoeing, particularly polo, he has other business interests on which he wishes to concentrate.

# What's new Eureka!



The Green Blue Initiative have a CD Environmental Code of Practice for anyone setting up a boating centre or marine business. Supported by the BMF, EA and RYA, it deals with handling a range of products from oil to sewage and looks at the legal and business issues.

## Win an Alpine holiday

At the OS Outdoor Show Stuart Woodward will be displaying Canoe Control's new trips and courses. One intention is to offer regular guests new horizons for their paddling. Despite offering an ever widening range of white water adventure products they still are very much a white water kayak/canoe school. They have, again, a blend of seasoned and younger coaches/guides as a team for the season. Deb Pinniger returns to her roots of Alpine boating to run Canoe Control's Play the River sessions. They are repeating their nationwide draw this year and will be offering the prize of a week's white water holiday for two in the French Alps. Last years winners had such a great time they had no option but to do it again. [01392 677167]



Peter Raynor photographs

## Hebridean courses

Hebridean Pursuits are running a Surf Lifesaving Society Emergency Surf Aid & Rescue Award weekend in Oban on Feb 19/20th. Ideal for surf kayak users and others in the surf zone, it will look at rescue craft, fitness, life support and first aid situations.

Later come vessel supported sea kayak trips. Over May 27th - Jun 3rd the working dive boat *MV Dungar* will take a party of six to the Inner and Outer Hebrides and, it is hoped, St Kilda where Hirta and stacks Lee and Armin will be the targets. [01631 710317]

The day after they return, Canoe Hebrides leave in the converted research vessel *MV Cuma* from Meavaig, returning to Stornoway on Jun 11th after visiting islands and remote sea lochs on the west coast of Lewis and, again, weather permitting, St Kilda. [01851 8207126]

The corresponding St Kilda trips last year by both companies were featured in our September issue.

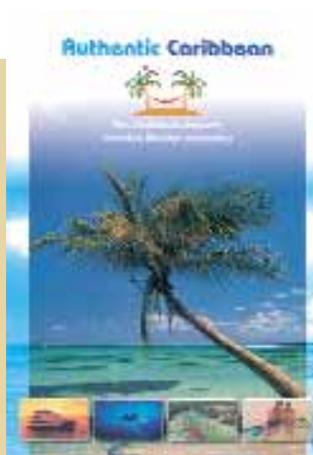
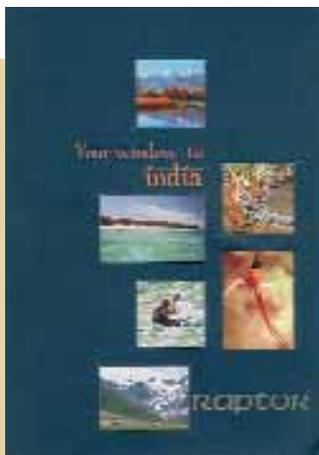
## Latest GPS units

Thales' latest GPS units range from the EXplorist 100 at £129.99 to the RoadMate 700 at £1,000. Maybe a unit such as the Navigation SporTrack Colour at £340, waterproof, floating and with sunlight viewable display, might suit your requirements.



Thales' EXplorist 100, RoadMate 700 and Navigation SporTrack Colour.

Shoreham Sea Kayaks have introduced a range of quality glassfibre sea kayaks at prices starting below £1,000, making them attractive alternatives to plastic boats. There are three high performance hull designs with various outfitting options to appeal to enthusiasts from intermediate to expert. [01273 464218]



### Travel safety training

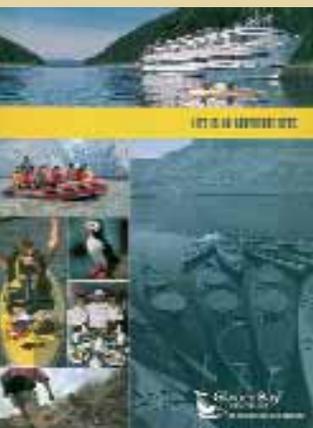
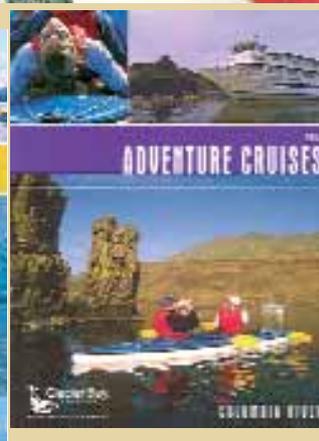
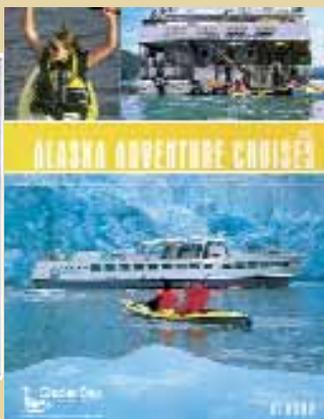
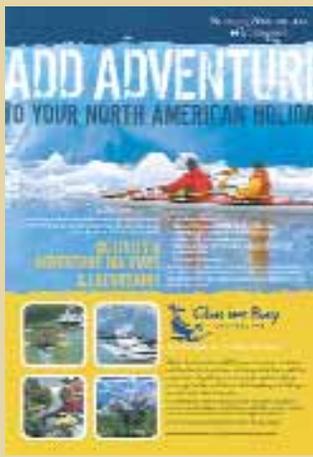
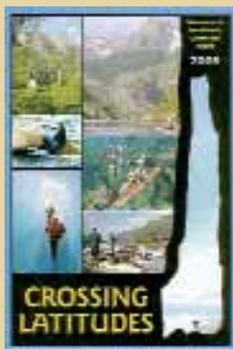
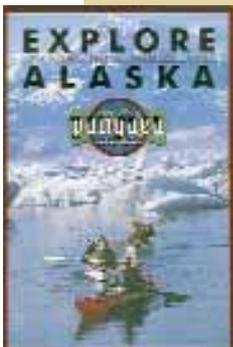
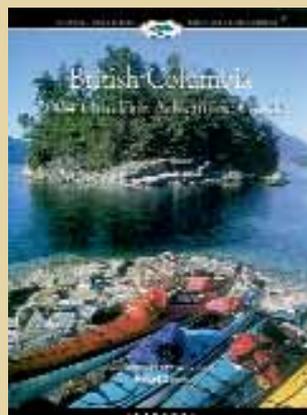
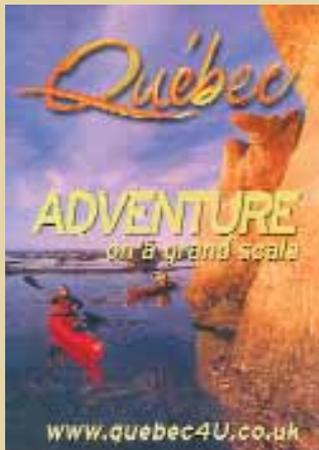
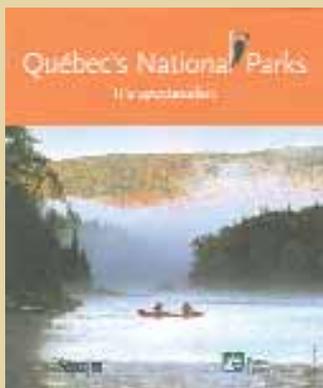
Objective offer travel safety training, based on their experience in global travel and military service around the world. Courses run from £175 per person to £750 for a group. Modular topics available are:

- Personal security and situation awareness
- Theft avoidance and security of possessions
- Kit, equipment and safety gadgets
- Terrorism advice and regional threats
- Cultural etiquette
- Emergency first aid
- Medical kits, bugs, bites and bowels
- Tropical and travel medicine
- Climatic environments and associated injuries
- Kidnap prevention and conduct if taken
- Theft, muggings and defusing confrontation
- Navigation
- Negotiating checkpoints
- Mines awareness
- Surviving natural disasters
- Off road driving

[01788 899029]

### Solar power

Select Solar have a range of solar power units on offer. Roll up 5W waterproof units start at £115 and you can get bigger and more durable panels until the point where you have constructed your own power station. In a month the Earth receives more energy from the sun than exists in all the known fossil fuel reserves. [01793 752032]



The Daily Telegraph Adventure Travel & Sports Show offered a range of paddling holidays, especially in sea kayaks. Spirit of Adventure operate in Europe and around the world with everything from sea kayaks to reed canoes and they also have their Powder Mills Bunkhouse near the River Dart with space for 26 in 4 rooms at £9 per person per night. [01822 880277]

Kashmir offers some paddling options and Raptor have white water kayak activity in India. Wacky Rollers have sit on tops in Dominica and Authentic Caribbean have kayaks at some of their sea venues in the same part of the world. Québec and British Columbia offer the inevitable kayak and canoe holidays expected in Canada. Pangaea Adventures use sea kayaks in Alaska, as do Crossing Latitudes, who also operate in Scandinavia and Greece and can run custom private trips such as a women's over 40 group. Both kayaks and canoes are featured at various Canadian locations with Frontier Canada. Finally, Glacier Bay Cruiseline have a fleet of cruise ships with racks of touring kayaks at the back which operate from floating pontoons they deploy. Their activities, together with some excellent wildlife film of the Glacier Bay national park, are shown on a 13 minute promotional DVD. [01902 851123]



The canoe village group had their own branded tent this year. In the foreground is the Dagger Exodus X, an American design to which a new deck has been fitted for the European market. [01275 798100]



Size



## Tsunami aftermath

The effects of the Dec 26th earthquake spread far beyond the shores of the Indian Ocean. Amongst those affected were White Water Consultancy International who had prepared a press release headed 'Tsunami hits Schroders London Boat Show' to promote Wilderness Systems' Tsunami kayaks, launched last August. Withdrawing the headline was the easy part of the problem. Wilderness Systems considered at length whether to change the name of the range. They have decided not to do so but Confluence Watersports, who own Wilderness Systems, will donate at least \$20,000 per year from proceeds to the AmeriCares fund, expecting to make a contribution of about \$100,000 during the lifetime of the products. In addition, each boat will carry a graphic on the outside and a memorial sticker in the cockpit. [08000 151520]



Recreation UK showed two ranges of kayaks they are importing, Zelezny from the Czech Republic and Drago Rossi. This lets them offer a wide selection of economy white water playboats. [0118 941 2777]



Perception have issued their white water and recreation and touring brochures, the latter rather larger, it might be noted. [01825 765891]





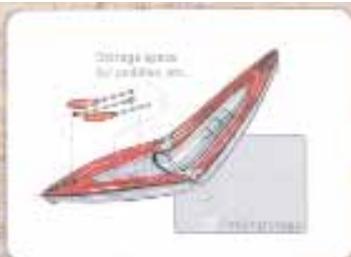
The Necky Crux breaks new ground by having a large spring fitted to each footrest support. Popouts might never be the same again. JO Watercraft also showed the new Old Town Charles River canoe which is actually 102 years old. What is new is the construction, a 4.77m version in PolyLite and a 4.96m RoyaleX version. [01493 745192]



Andrew Wood photographs



The Bic Yakka has some unusual thinking, a rigid hull which folds in half and an inflatable deck. The design allows it to be shut for compact storage with accessories placed inside. Nearly as unusual a concept is the Scapa (above), normally a self bailing sit on top, to be available in a limited edition with a clip on deck for when weather conditions are less amenable. [0115 973 1001]



# THE CANADIAN CANOE MUSEUM

Preserving Canada's national heritage

*'Wherever there is a channel for water, - there is a road for the canoe.'*  
Henry David Thoreau (1817 - 1862)

The Canada we know today exists as a direct result of the canoe. The canoe is a recognized symbol of Canada and determined our national boundaries. Long before the arrival of Europeans in the Western Hemisphere the canoe was at the centre of aboriginal life and was the principal means of trade and communication between the First Nations.

The word 'canoa' or 'canoe' meaning boat or vessel appeared in the earliest writings about the First Peoples of the New World and was adapted from the Arawak language of the Native Caribbeans.

As the early 17th century Europeans ventured deeper into the North American continent they discovered extensive aboriginal trade networks already in place along established canoe routes. They found that their own heavy boats were not suitable for travelling the lakes, rivers and portages and learned quickly the value of the canoe.

## The Canadian Canoe Museum

The Canadian Canoe Museum is North America's only canoe museum. With more than 600 canoes and kayaks and 1,000 related artifacts, the museum's collection is the largest of its kind in the world.

The collection features examples of aboriginal craft that span the continent of North America. They range from great cedar whaling dugouts of the west coast and fine bark canoes to the skin kayaks of the Arctic. These vessels demonstrate the skills and ingenuity of the builders who constructed them using available resources from the land and sea, using them for hunting, fishing, trade and warfare.

Today, these vessels serve as teaching tools, help to revive canoe building traditions and create an appreciation of heritage and culture in communities across the nation.

The museum houses a variety of historic wooden canoes (built in the canoe manufacturing centres during the late 1800s and early 1900s), many examples of international craft from Senegal, Africa, Papua New Guinea, Taiwan and Polynesia, dugout craft with outriggers and unique sewn plank canoes.

About 100 craft are on display in the Weston centre. (The remainder of the approximately 600 total craft are stored in the collection centre which is not open to the public. The board of directors is working on a three year plan which may eventually see a portion of the collection centre open to the public.)

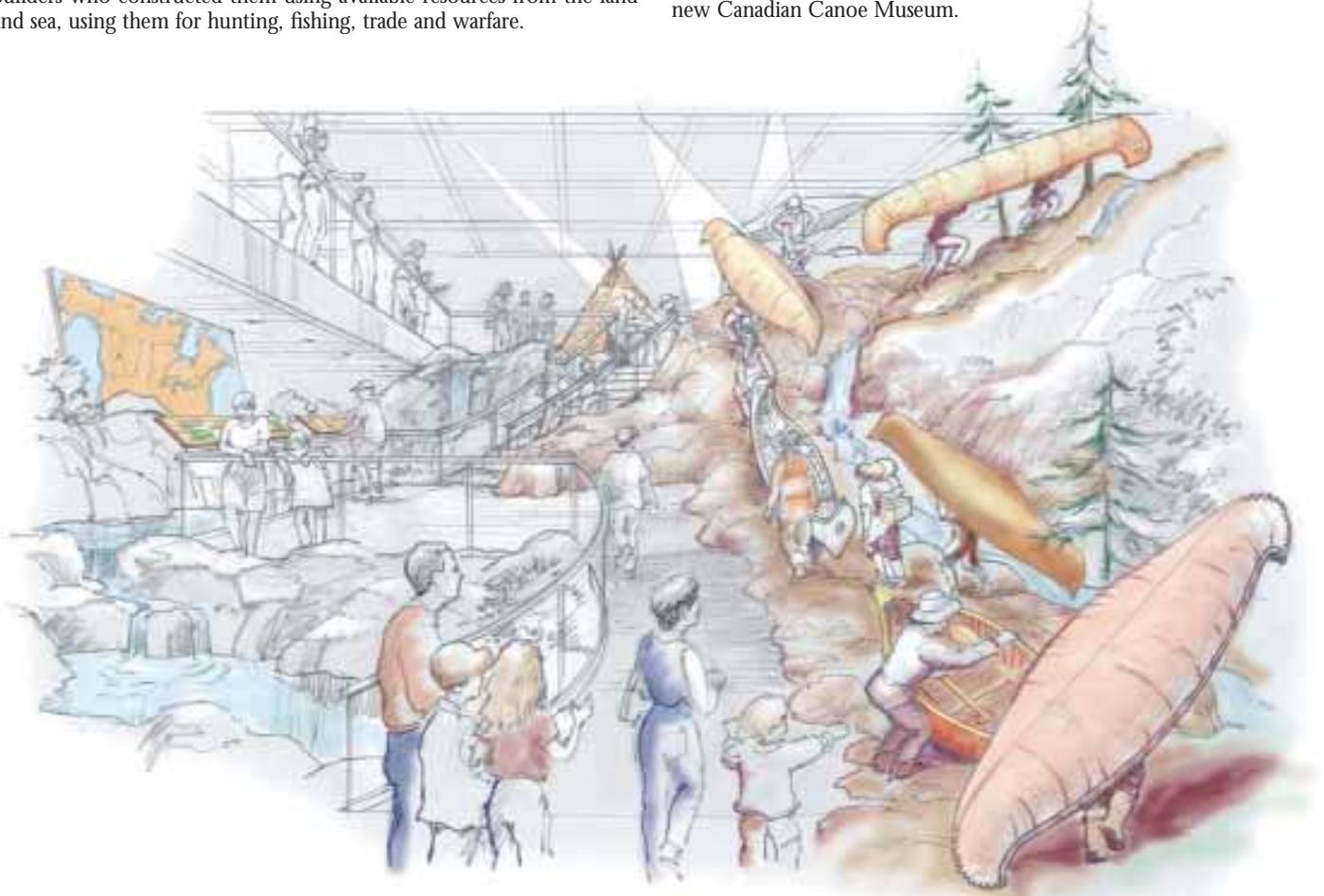
## Kirk Wipper, founder of the CCM

Kirk Wipper has a remarkable passion for Canadian history and canoes and it was his idea to create a museum of canoes and kayaks (originally assembled and exhibited at the Kanawa International Museum).

'Every Canadian owns part of this collection and they present a wonderful story of survival.'

There is a story behind every canoe in the collection, which he has been building since he received an ancient dugout canoe from a friend in 1955.

In 1990 Kirk turned over his impressive Kanawa collection to the new Canadian Canoe Museum.



*A key factor in enhancing the canoe museum's impressive collection was creating a comprehensive sequence for the visitor's experience. With objects that are as large and as delicate as canoes the layout of the actual museum site was critical to the visitor experience.*

## How the Canadian Canoe Museum was created

In the conceptual stage Commonwealth Historic Resource Management Limited led a team of consultants who worked closely with the canoe museum directors throughout the three phase development process. The feasibility study suggested that, with proper design, planning and marketing, a museum dedicated to the Canadian canoe was indeed a viable possibility.

Commonwealth began by formulating the museum's interpretive goals and objectives and by developing a comprehensive site plan.

According to John Stewart, principal of Commonwealth, the interactions enabled the development and refinement of a masterplan for the eight acre site and refurbishment of the two buildings totalling 140,000 square feet.

'A key factor in enhancing the canoe museum's impressive collection,' reports Stewart, 'involved creating a comprehensive historical sequence for the visitors experience'.

As Janice Griffith, manager of the museum, explained, 'In many respects the museum site and our extensive collection were configured to illustrate the European experience from the first contact in North America. As the British and French explorers gradually discovered the extensive aboriginal trade networks that were already in place along established canoe routes they also discovered the amazing range of watercraft constructed from available natural resources.'

Our exhibits are professionally designed to demonstrate the unique relationship between aboriginals and Europeans and the development of the canoe over time as it was used for different purposes. We also want our visitors to understand the extent of aboriginal ingenuity and adaptability and their environmentally sustainable approach to life.'

## CCM update

Until last summer attendance steadily increased, reaching 40,000 visitors two years ago, but the rough economy has taken its toll. Last year the number of visitors dropped dramatically. While very successful in obtaining private and government funds for capital projects, the Canoe Museum, like many cultural and heritage organizations, has always had difficulty obtaining enough operating funds. In October 2003 a severe lack of operating funds forced the museum to shut its doors and lay off all paid staff.

Recognizing the value of this unique and irreplaceable collection, the City of Peterborough stepped forward with funding to hire professional restructuring counsel. The board of directors met weekly from October to May. A one year restructuring and survival plan was created. The City of Peterborough gave \$60,000 towards the 2004 operating budget. The County of Peterborough came forward with \$10,000 to help. Hudson's Bay Company gave \$25,000 to restart the education programmes. A membership drive brought in another \$80,000 and special events \$65,000. A new lender/donor stepped forward to assume the bank liability at very favourable terms. A manager was hired and with only two full time staff and an army of volunteers, the museum reopened its doors May 1st 2004.

'While we are doing very well following our survival plan for 2004,' reports Griffith, 'we are not yet completely out of the woods financially. We are currently raising dollars in a one time local campaign of \$100,000. Half will go towards operating expenses, half towards debt reduction. The woodworking shop volunteers have done a beautiful job of trimming out a 15 ft glassfibre canoe (value \$2,000) for a raffle.

A group of teachers and friends of the museum were organizing a dinner, dance and auction. Tickets were \$50.

To learn more about the museum and fund raising events visit CCM or visit <http://www.canoemuseum.net>.

**Brian Burton** recently completed a third term with the CCMC's Standing Committee for Technical Evaluations and is a regular contributor to many leading landscaping and engineering publications. He is affiliated with the Tree Canada Foundation. To contact Brian e-mail [bburton@bba.on.ca](mailto:bburton@bba.on.ca).



*The collection features examples of aboriginal craft that span the continent of North America. They range from great cedar whaling dugouts of the west coast and to fine bark canoes to the skin kayaks of the Arctic. These vessels exemplify the skills and ingenuity of the builders who constructed them using available resources from the land and sea.*

There is an ancient and rich diversity in canoe shapes, construction and purpose, a knowledge that native builders have refined over the past centuries. Some canoes were elegantly carved and formed from the massive trees of the northern Pacific coast for trade, war and for hunting the great whales. Other builders carved smaller canoes, well suited for travelling rivers, creeks and small waterways. In the harsh treeless Arctic landscape the generosity of the ocean and rivers provided Inuit builders with animals and driftwood from which they perfected the seaworthy shapes of their covered hunting craft.

The canoe of the aboriginal peoples is the ultimate expression of elegance and function in the world of watercraft, each tribe being defined by the distinct shape of its canoe or kayak, and they were not only the principal means of transportation but was also critical to almost every facet of life; canoe and kayak builders were revered in their societies.

Throughout much of the rest of Canada the rind of the white birch tree helped native builders to overcome the challenges of overland and coastal travel. Builders of bark canoes removed the supple skin from these trees, tailored them into carefully proportioned vessels of their own traditions and lined the entire craft with lightweight wooden frames. In a land crisscrossed by a myriad of rivers and creeks, the birch bark canoe provided the traveller with a craft that could carry a great load, was light enough to be carried as the need arose and could manage the rigours of early travel.

Perhaps the most celebrated figure of this early commerce was the voyageur, that colourful paddler who remains enshrined beside the birch bark canoe in Canadian folklore today. By the late eighteenth century large bark canoes paddled by voyageurs and used for distance transport had connected the businesses of the St Lawrence valley with the Mississippi as well as the western and northern reaches of the continent.

At once simple and elegant yet at the same time a tribute to the ingenuity and strength, the canoe is a truly enduring symbol of Canadian culture, of native invention and French and English adaptability. The importance of the canoe in Canadian exploration, early trading commerce and its widespread use and recreation has left an indelible mark on the Canadian psyche. The image of the canoe, whether depicted in art, on silver or paper or springing from personal memory, evokes a wide range of senses from excitement to solitude and a legacy of history and adventure.

*Drawings are provided by courtesy of Commonwealth Historic Resource Management Limited, [www.chrml.com](http://www.chrml.com).*

## Continuing the orange theme

It was back in 1967 that the famous orange Force Ten tent first came on the camping scene. Since then every outdoor enthusiast of a certain age will have used one and have fond memories of an expedition using one. They were and still are simple to erect and bombproof. I remember unzipping the fly on my Vango Force Ten one morning while on a cycle tour in Ireland to find the campsite devastated with people trying to retrieve parts of their tents and equipment from the trees surrounding the site. We had slept soundly in our Force Ten, oblivious to the mayhem the storm was causing.

35 years on, the Force Ten range still includes the standard orange cotton tent but the range has been re-engineered to include modern tents, sleeping bags, bivi bags, rucksacks and bothy bags.

tent; if the wind changes direction you can always use the optimum entrance/exit. There are a couple of nice touches; reflective strips on guys make it is easy to see in the dark and there are windows so you can look out at the view or to check whether it is raining that hard. This is a well designed and engineered tent which works on the belt and braces approach with snow valances and extra poles that can be used to give that extra support when required.

My only criticism is that it does hold condensation between the inner and outer and does take quite a lot of drying out. Overall, it is an absolutely bombproof tent that does full justice to all that has gone before.

### Alpine Bivi

Lightweight protection against wind, rain and snow.

Raised bathtub groundsheet side walls to allow maximum sleeping bag loft. Breathable, waterproof and durable 3 layer laminated fabric Hytex Dura AIR-RS.

Made extra long for storage.

Large ventilation panels for temperature regulation.

Oversized zip covers and peg loops.

Nice additional feature is an emergency repair kit.

The bivi is nice and light (0.7kg) and easy to get in and out of. The provision of four attachment points gives you the useful option of pegging out the floor. The large entrance/exit can be covered by a zipped mozzie net and this is great protection when you do want more ventilation but do not want to be eaten alive. (I was testing the bivi with a friend on a trip in Sweden. He woke one morning after having a dream during the night that he was having his skull bored into. On reaching for the spot on his head where, in the dream, he was being attacked he actually found a large slug rasping away at his hair. I looked at the spot and found that the slug had, over the night, eaten away a 5p size hole in his hair. His bivi had no mozzie net; you

pays your money and takes your chance.) There is room inside for you and a small day sack but the mummy style floor shape does not allow for a sleeping mat to be placed inside.



### Enduro 42

One of the pack range 42 litres. Lightweight and ergonomically designed.

Hydration compliant.

Tough nylon base.

Air force back, water resistant zip.

Deep side pockets, front mesh pocket, daisy chain, reflective piping and zip pulls, ice axe/trekking pole holders, side compression straps.

Whistle key holder.

This is a great great pack, very comfortable to wear and easy to use. I liked all the features such as the various loops, pockets and closures, the lightness and the comfort of the pack and I especially liked the reflective elements on the sack which made it and me more visible in lights at night while cycling. The whistle that is also the chest strap clip was great but could get a little taxing when the children and some adults were using it! The sack worked well in all situations from hand luggage on a plane, journeying in a canoe and while competing on an enduro event; I and others were very pleased with it. However, what piece of equipment is perfect? The Enduro 42 is no exception; after a month the toggles on the zip strings all pulled off. It is a



Vortex  
Stability  
Silence  
Ease of  
erection  
Reflective  
guys  
Extra poles

Alpine Bivi  
Emergency  
repair kit  
Weight  
Ease of  
entry  
Floor  
pegging  
Insect  
protection

Enduro 42  
Comfort  
Weight  
Reflective  
elements  
Whistle

Proton  
Size  
Baffles  
Insulation



Vortex  
Condensation

Alpine Bivi  
Lack of  
sleeping mat  
space

Enduro 42  
Zip toggles



### Vortex, a two person mountain tent

The Vortex is a 5 season, 2 person geodesic mountain tent with a pack volume of 16 litres and a minimum weight of 4.00kg, max weight 4.95kg.

The geodesic shape makes it exceptionally stable and quiet while the fast clips and colour coded poles make for quick and easy one person pitching. The tent is symmetrical so there are porches on either side of the





shame because these toggles made it easier to open the zip closures and had elements in them that fluoresced in the dark. The loss of these marred what is a fine rucksack.

### Force Ten Proton Sleeping Bag

700+ goose down. Pertex Quantum shell fabric offers great strength to weight ratio, giving minimum pack size and silky smooth feel.

Insulated shoulder baffle and twin zip baffles. Mesh storage sack for longterm storage.

The bag packs down easily to a really small size but offers great warmth and insulation when in use. The baffles all work well and the bag, for me, has a high snuggle factor that makes it a pleasure to get into and an effort to leave. The use of down allows you to use a bag over a greater range of temperature than a synthetic bag but you have to keep it dry. I got the bag wet on a trip but it dried out really quickly, thank goodness.

This is a small sample of what Force Ten has to offer; the range does live up to its past and it is great that the designers have continued the orange theme. Long may it continue. If I was pushed to pick one bit of gear from



Dave Halsall photographs

the list it would, after careful consideration, be... the Enduro 42 rucksack. It's light, comfortable and packed with ergonomic design features that make it easy to use.

**Dave Halsall**

Available from AMG Outdoor Ltd, 2 Kelburn Business Park, Port Glasgow, Renfrewshire PA14 6TD, tel 01475 746000.

## Test 2 Stahlsac Deluxe Daypack

# The daypack answer to the Meccano outfit

Stahlsac are a diving company but their brochure is now specifically mentioning canoeing and prominent canoeing river names are being used for some of their product titles.

This is generously sized for a daypack and could serve the light traveller for longer periods. In polyester, it is absolutely loaded with features and options. Everything that can be adjustable seems to have that ability.

Although frameless, the front (as worn) is quite stiff and has four ventilated padding panels which, with the padded shoulder straps, make it comfortable to wear.

The main compartment has a diaphragm just over halfway down, zipped in to turn it into two separate

compartments if preferred. The zips are difficult to operate, being folded through 90° and rather inaccessible although zips on the outside allow full width entry to the lower compartment, on the outside of which is another full width pocket.

Inside, a wall runs the full height to give a waterproof compartment for damp kit, with a Velcro sealed small pocket at the top. Another pocket across the outside at the top has a further Velcro sealed closed pocket enclosed. This is the only one of these outside pockets which does not have two zips for flexibility of use, each with webbing pull tabs, and the outside pockets each has a weatherproof flap over the zip.

This is not the end of the pockets,

however. There is a mesh pocket each side with an adjustable strap across its top. Two adjustable straps connect a pair of neoprene flaps which could hold a hydration pouch.

The shoulder straps have a connector across the chest, adjustable, quick release and with an elasticated tensioner. This is in addition to the belt at the bottom. At the top is a substantial rubber handle which is very convenient for moving it around when not being worn.

The main compartment has a compression strap each side to reduce the tension on the zips across the main compartment if you have it heavily loaded.

All the straps have their ends folded over and sewn to prevent fraying. Indeed, the shoulder straps and pair connecting the neoprene flaps have loops sewn into their ends and there is another pair of loops on the bottom of the pack so you can attach more kit. It is the nearest daypacks have yet reached to Meccano outfits.

The final attraction has to be a very affordable price. The sheer versatility brings its own problem in the number of straps hanging off it, however. I would not be in a hurry to see it going onto an airport conveyor, trailing its webbing tentacles. I would be tempted to trim back any straps I found surplus to my normal requirements and would still be left with a comprehensive product.



Marcus Bray



Price (inc VAT) - £45

Manufactured in China for Stahlsac, USA. Available from MarKat, 34 Kings Rd, Sherborne, Dorset DT9 4HU, tel 01935 815424.



### Gilles, Jim and Frances

The slow moving eye of Hurricane Frances, a storm two hundred and fifty miles in diameter with winds in excess of 120 mph, reached Cocoa Beach on the east coast of Florida on Sunday 5th September 2004. The steeple of the First Baptist Church was snapped off like a twig and hurled like a javelin through the roof of an adjacent building. Four days later Frances had left 34 people dead in its wake and caused more than US\$4.1 billion in damages. Although the exceptionally strong winds were a major cause of the destruction, Frances will be remembered more for the exceptionally severe flooding. Eight inches of rain fell in three days. Fire ants were floating down rivers in huge balls and the coastal storm surge, in excess of 8 feet in places, eroded entire beaches down to the bedrock. Shocking though the images were, I had no reason to suspect that Frances and I would soon cross paths; why should I when I was going paddling in Gaspésie, Quebec, and Frances was in Florida?

It was the first time in thirty years of canoeing that I have caught a train to go on a paddling trip. VIA Rail runs a couchette service out of Montreal, called the Chaleur, which travels along the south shore of the St Lawrence estuary, past Quebec City and then on to the town of Gaspé, the regional capital of this unique part of Canada. You board the bustling train at around 6pm and, after a fine supper and a glass or two, you retire. Your sleeper berth is literally six feet square and just as you begin to wonder where you are going to sling your hammock for the night a coach attendant appears and pulls an innocuous looking lever. As if you are a participant in a bizarre David Blaine locomotive illusion, a long drawer opens and a full size feather bed slides out from nowhere, a complete wash stand folds down out of the wall and a toilet bowl appears from, presumably, the floor. It's an absolute masterpiece of design and engineering and the effect is instantly soporific. The gentle rocking motion of the train and the clickettyclack of the wheels journeyed me into a dreamless sleep with vague recollections of small stations whizzing by in the night with names like Saint Hyacinthe, Rivière-du-Loup and Trois-Pistoles.

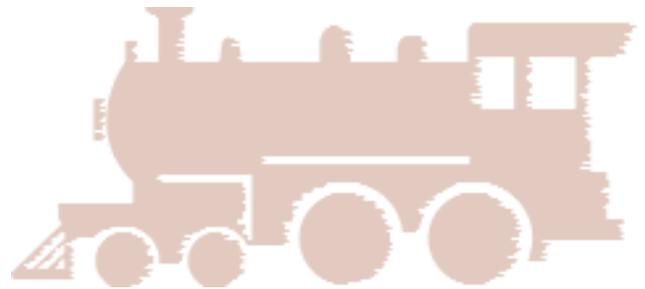
### One of the world's ten clearest rivers

Twelve hours after leaving Montreal you arrive at Baie des Chaleurs, the bay of warmth. This large inlet divides the south coast of the Gaspé peninsula from New Brunswick and along its coastline lies a string of small villages and towns steeped in native and Acadian history. In the middle of the eighteenth century the indigenous Micmac fought side by side here with French colonists against the British. The town of Matapédia hosts a National Historic Site commemorating the definitive Battle of Restigouche when a French flotilla that had sailed from Bordeaux to liberate New France in 1760 was routed in a matter of hours. From here the train follows the scenic coast of the Baie des Chaleurs to Gaspé, its final destination, but I was getting off at the village of Bonaventure, a stronghold of Acadian culture, where I was meeting up with my group of fellow paddlers.

At the tiny station in Bonaventure I was greeted by a team of representatives from Tourisme Québec, who were hosting my visit. It was time to resurrect my rusty French although everyone was quite happy to chatter away to me in English. They were a lively group and I felt instantly welcome. Shortly after our arrival we were picked up by our guide from Cime Aventure and transported in a multicoloured bus to their base camp. Even after a twelve hour train journey I felt refreshed and excited and more than ready to tackle the next stage of my expedition, the Bonaventure River.

Cime Aventure has been operating as an outfitting company on the banks of the Bonaventure for sixteen years and is run by Gilles Brideau and his partner, Françoise Belanger. They broke the mould after Gilles was born; he is definitely a unique character. Small and wiry, like so many French Canadians who thrive in the woods, Gilles outpours enthusiasm and humour twenty four hours a day. You could light Quebec City with his energy. With a bottle of beer in one hand and a weather beaten leather hat, which I am convinced has never left his head since he started the business, Gilles looks every bit the backwoods pioneer. I could tell we were not going to be bored. That evening, after a sumptuous supper, the wine flowed and, by the light of a huge log fire, Gilles' tales got longer and taller and took us into the wee hours. We slept in tepees on the side of the river that night and I could still hear chuckles long after all were tucked into their sleeping bags. Paddling the Bonaventure with this guy was definitely going to be fun. The only concern was the weather.

The rivers of Gaspésie are famous for two things, their gin clear water and the excellent salmon fishing. Of all the rivers that flow north and south from the central highlands of the peninsula the Bonaventure is reputed to be the clearest; in fact, it is rated as one of the ten most limpid rivers in the world. Its waters flow southwards for 150km from its source in the Chic-Choc mountains, where the river starts as a small stream rushing through steep tree lined gorges, to the sea at the small village that bears the same name. Along the way the Bonaventure passes through magnificently wild forests which abound with wildlife; moose, black bear, wolf and lynx still forage and hunt in these parts. There is an atmosphere of true isolation, a feeling that you really are in the wilderness.



### The river had started to rise noticeably

We were planning a journey of around fifty kilometres with one overnight stop so we busied ourselves the next morning packing our food and camping gear. By noon we were done and heading to the put in in the happy bus. It had been raining increasingly heavily all night and by the time we reached our departure point the downpour was torrential and the wind was close to gale force. It was a very wild day and quite daunting but the weather did nothing to dampen the group's spirits and everyone was very upbeat as we loaded our canoes and prepared to start paddling. We set off in six tandem boats accompanied by Gilles, who stood up in the middle of his heavily loaded solo canoe and propelled his way downstream using a long wooden pole, a very traditional method of river travel in Gaspésie but

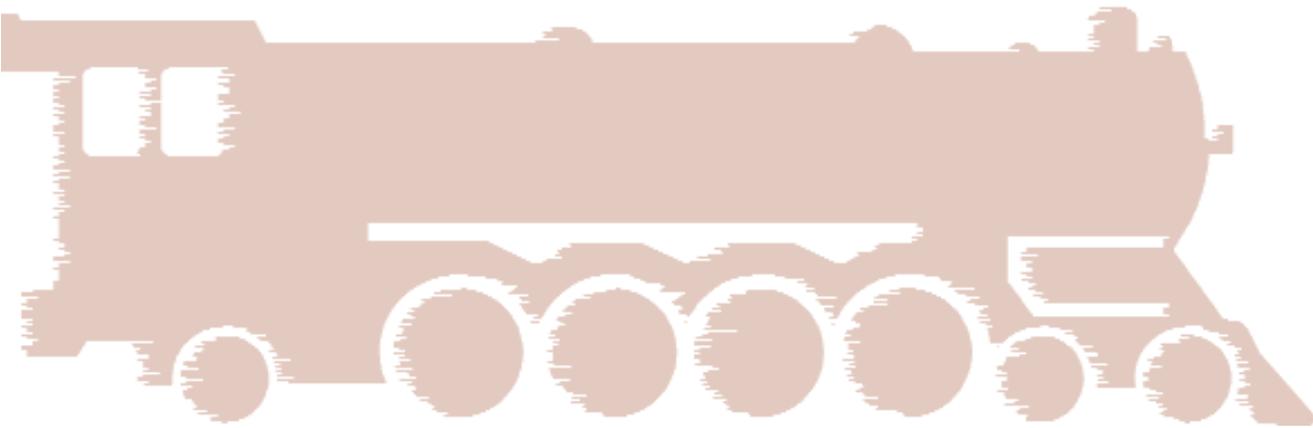
one which takes considerable skill. It felt much safer kneeling down and using a paddle.

The Bonaventure River, under average conditions, is fast flowing with many minor rapids which only add fun and interest to the journey but are nowhere technically too challenging for anyone comfortable at the lower end of grade three, and there are only a couple of places where the difficulty reaches that level. For most of its length it is grade two so we were not expecting any real difficulties, even though many of the group were novices. Of course, we hadn't counted on meeting up with the tail end of Hurricane Frances.

By the middle of the afternoon the river had started to rise noticeably and the legendary limpid waters were taking on a brownish tinge. The rain was incessant and seemed heavier than ever and we were a sodden bunch by the time we reached our campsite even though nobody had come even close to a capsized. The beach where we were supposed to camp had all but disappeared so we were forced to hike up steep, muddy banks to find a place to pitch our tents in the forest but nobody was bothered and we soon had a campfire crackling and a pot of water on the boil. Gilles unpacked his blue waterproof barrels and started preparing supper, along with his assistant, Christian. Once again we were awestruck. Instead of the usual uninteresting, sometimes indigestible, run of the mill camp food our first course was an appetizer of fresh Malpeque oysters washed down with white wine. Suddenly the weather didn't matter anymore. We'd had a great day's paddling and the rain had been nothing more than a minor inconvenience. Gilles, ever the showman, then magically produced two huge fresh salmon from one of his barrels, stuffed them with garlic butter, seasoned them with dill, wrapped them in foil and tossed them on the grill. Forty five minutes later the salmon flesh was falling off the bone onto our plates. Finally, as if to prove that any fool can be uncomfortable, a cheese board appeared and we ended the finest meal I have ever had in my life with a choice of ripe Quebec fromages that would have left any serious gourmet weak at the knees. I thought we were supposed to be roughing it. Not so far. Even though the rain was hammering down, our cosy little camp was protected by the trees and, after a few more glasses of wine, the group retired to bed, well satisfied with their day. It was a good job that our guide was not only a great chef but also river wise. The last thing he did was to carry all the gear up to a point high above the waterline and tie up the canoes. The river was still rising fast and the rain was unremitting.

very concerned. The canoes he had so wisely made fast to some trees the night before were now floating around on the edge of the forest. They were still secure but the normally simple task of loading up the camping gear and launching into the river was now going to be a very tricky undertaking for the group. I suggested to Gilles that we took a walk down the bank and scout the next kilometre of river ahead and he heartily agreed. Together we bushwhacked down the true left bank of the Bonaventure, stopping wherever there was a spot where we could inspect the river more closely. The river swept around a long left bend and there was a tiny green island close to the shore. Gilles explained, in disbelief, that normally this was a very big island, big enough to camp on. We continued our reconnaissance but all we saw was much of the same; the river had broken its banks and was running wildly through the woods on both sides. There were large brown wave trains in the middle of the main stream and at the very edges the current was confused by whirlpools and boils. Where there were normally huge eddies that would accommodate a naval fleet now there were none, no sanctuaries in which to rest or gather the group for the next section of river. This is what made the prospect of running the river with a group of inexperienced paddlers so daunting; the current was running so fast that if any of the canoes were to flip it would be almost impossible to rescue the swimmers or the equipment quickly enough for the group to stay together. The team would then be divided; obviously, the more competent paddlers, and it would take several, would be doing the rescue so the remainder of the team would be left leaderless on a river that was way beyond their technical capabilities. I did not envy Gilles's position; after all, he was leading the trip. Therefore, he had to make the final call. I asked him if we were anywhere near a road or other escape route and he looked at me tight lipped and shook his head. We were definitely out in the woods. He explained there was only one real option. About four kilometres downstream was a small road bridge with an exit from the river on the right bank. We would have to risk it and run the river down to this point and pray that nobody capsized. We turned back upstream and hiked back to the campsite and, on the way, we came up with a plan.

Christian already had breakfast on the go when Gilles and I arrived back at the campsite and the rest of the team were sitting around the fire, tucking into Moroccan omelettes, looking very relaxed. Everyone was cheerful and making jokes about the river; very few of them appreciated the gravity of the situation and perhaps it was better that



### I heard the river before I saw it

We hardly noticed the precipitation during the night and we certainly didn't feel the wind; our tents were so well protected by the trees. I was up bright and early the next morning and a little bit disappointed that it was still raining; nevertheless, I made my way down the bank to take a look at the river. I heard it before I saw it. Initially I wasn't quite sure what the sound was and where it was coming from; it sounded a bit like the train but as I reached the edge of the bank where it dropped steeply down I saw the reason for the noise. The Bonaventure, considered to be amongst the ten most crystal clear rivers on the planet, was a foaming mass of violent, chocolate brown water. The river had risen six feet above its banks and was now flowing through the forest; every eddy had disappeared and huge tree trunks and branches drove past at an incredible speed. It was a terrifying sight and I've been paddling rivers for thirty years; what about the rest of the team I thought. Most of them were novices. We were in a very serious situation, very serious indeed.

I heard a noise behind me in the bush and turned to see Gilles emerging from a small clearing a little further downstream. He looked

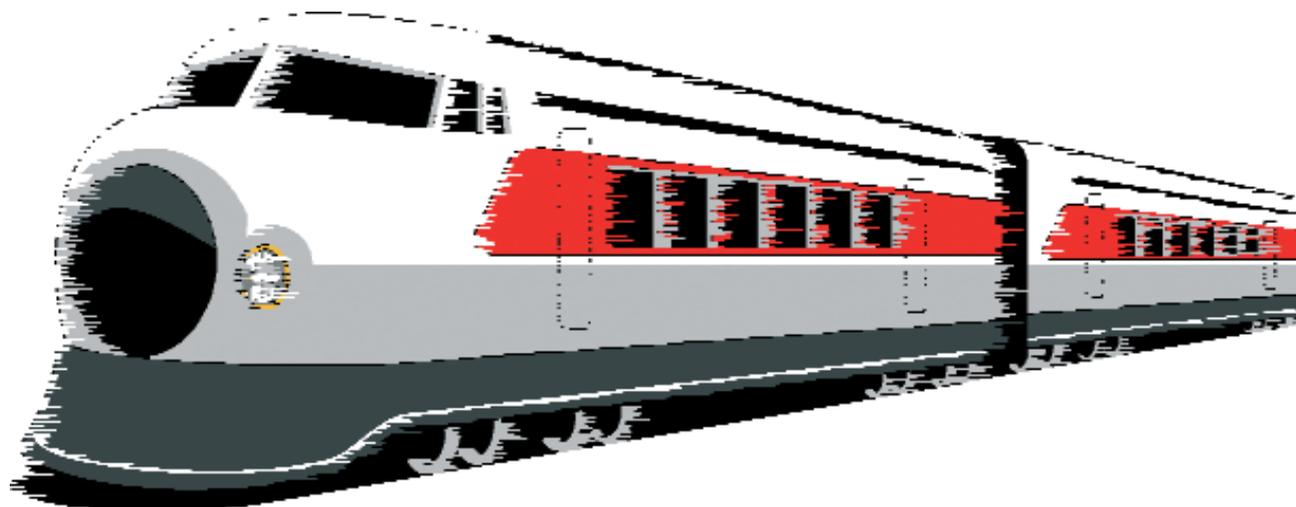
way. People are more likely to make mistakes in crucial situations if they are tense so the most important thing was to stay cool, calm and collected. At the same time it is also important that participants in a crisis are given a realistic understanding of the consequences; dramatization should be avoided but humour can keep things real. Calmly, Gilles ate his breakfast and then called the group together for a briefing. Openly, the situation was explained to the team and the plan spelled out. We would load the canoes by pulling them up into the woods and then relaunch them carefully so they stayed close to the river's edge. All the gear would be securely lashed in. Once the whole group was on the water we would make our way down the left bank in single file, leaving plenty of space between each canoe so that nobody ran into the boat in front if they got caught up in a bush or an overhanging branch. Gilles would take the front, I was in the middle and Christian held up the rear; that way we spread the experience evenly. If anyone flipped there was a good chance that one of the more experienced paddlers would be close by and able to catch the swimmers and the equipment quickly. Speed was vital in order to prevent the capsized crew from getting pulled into the main current

and sucked downstream. Everyone was briefed carefully but we kept the humour going; there was no point in scaring them all out of their wits. After all, this was supposed to be fun.

Gilles led off and, one by one, the rest of the team followed; we negotiated the tricky lefthand bend, hugging the shoreline to stay in the weakest part of the current, and then we had to make the most crucial move; in order to exit the river we had to cross over to the right bank before we reached the bridge. I saw Gilles gradually enter the main stream on a diagonal line rightwards and the rest of the team followed. We crossed the centre of the river through some substantial waves without a problem but it was tense. After another few minutes we were gliding down the side of the bushes on the other side of the river and starting to think about how we were going to stop at the take out. I paddled ahead of the group and reached the bridge well before anyone else; fortunately there was a large indentation in the bank where salmon fisherman launched their boats and, even though the river was flooded out, there was still a reasonable sized eddy there. My partner, Sophie, and I quickly jumped out, secured our canoe and then waded out to the edge of the eddy to wait for the next boat. One by one we guided the canoes into the eddy by grabbing their bow lines but, to be fair to the team, they were doing unbelievably well under the circumstances, considering their level experience and the seriousness of the situation. They paddled confidently and even seemed to be enjoying it. As for the guides, the ones who knew the truth, I don't think anyone has ever been more relieved to get a group off of a river than Gilles and Christian were that day. To cap it all, the rain stopped and the sun came out. How comforting it was to feel its warmth.

several grade II and a few grade III rapids on this section but it was impossible to predict whether they would be washed out or more difficult. Sometimes this happens; rapids disappear and sometimes rapids appear where there are normally none. A river in raging flood is a savage, unpredictable beast.

Our first challenge was a rapid called Le Cheval Blanc, White Horse Rapids. Christian told me that normally there is a white hole in the middle of the river which gives the rapid its name but when we reached the place where this should have been all we saw was a long line of standing waves. They were large but not technically difficult. Our main problem was that we were not paddling a canoe that was outfitted for difficult white water; there were no thigh straps, no airbags and no spraydeck. We were both very experienced on big rivers and that was our personal choice; we weren't guiding and were responsible only for ourselves. We both decided that running the river in this unique condition was too good an opportunity to miss but we also understood the risks completely. We could easily get swamped by big waves even if we didn't capsize and we would have to fend for ourselves if that happened. Nevertheless, we were confident that we could do the run successfully. We paddled on. Christian felt certain that the crux of the journey would be where the Duval River entered on river left. This tributary would be carrying a huge volume of water which would pile into the main stream of the Bonaventure and create extremely chaotic water. He was right. We took the righthand side of the river to avoid the point where the Duval River flowed in but, nevertheless, there were several river wide holes that we had no choice but to run. There were several very unstable moments but Christian leaned on a sequence of huge braces and saved us from flipping more



Gilles burrowed into his personal bag of tricks and pulled out a satellite telephone, an essential piece of equipment for any guide in the wilderness these days, and soon contacted base camp. The happy bus would pick us up in about two hours so we started piling up paddles and lifejackets in preparation for its arrival. Down by the water's edge I noticed Gilles and Christian in a huddle. I strolled down and discovered that Christian wanted to run the rest of the river and was looking for a partner. Before I could stop myself I had volunteered; it's called foot and mouth disease. I always do that; open my mouth and then shove my foot very firmly into it. I pulled on my lifejacket again and grabbed a paddle. Christian gestured towards the bow of the boat and I nodded. Before I knew it we were waving adieu to the group, breaking into the current and beginning the biggest roller coaster ride of my life.

Christian knew the river intimately; he had been guiding for Cime Aventure for several seasons and had often run the river during spring runoff. He had done almost thirty trips that year alone but he had never seen the river this high, not even in late May when the snows melted. This was definitely going to be different. As we paddled downstream through big bouncy waves at an incredible pace I pulled out my GPS. I was curious to see exactly what speed we were doing. We stopped paddling; we were doing 14km/h without even trying. We then picked up the pace with our blades and I watched the speedometer on the GPS start to climb. We peaked at 19km/h, which made it the fastest canoe in which I have ever kneeled. We had forty kilometres to go to Cime Aventure's base camp and at this rate we would be there in a little over two hours; however, there were a few gnarly problems to face on the way home. There were normally

than once. He told me afterwards that he had braced his way down most of that section but I was oblivious in the front of the boat, anyway; all I saw was foam. After the Duval section there were several big bouncy sections but nothing as serious. We passed trailers floating in the woods, sunken boats and even a couple of kayaks hauled up into the bush. We ploughed into some bushes just below the kayaks (it was the best way to stop) to see if anyone needed any assistance but there was nobody to be found; it looked like a group had abandoned their trip and taken the overland route. Once again we paddled on and, before we knew, it we had covered the forty kilometre back to base. We were convinced we would arrive before the rest of the group but, as we approached the dock, we saw arms waving and heard cheers. The team were two beers ahead of us. It was time to catch up. We told our story time and, time again, and after each beverage the waves got bigger and the holes got grabbier. It was a fun ride and we got away with it; that doesn't mean we will next time.

Did we learn anything? Well, realistically there was no way that we could have predicted that the river was going to rise to unprecedented levels and catch us out in the wilderness. Not even Gilles, after sixteen years running that river, could have predicted that. He said so. What we did learn was that there is no substitute for experience; it was years of paddling rivers in every imaginable water state that gave Gilles the confidence and the skill to deal with the situation. He made exactly the right decision, formulated a plan that was as safe as it could have been, given the nature of the river, and then executed it calmly and professionally. One flip and things could have been very, very different.

**Jim Hargreaves**

# Do you know

## A useless little number

In the Dec 04 *Canoeist*, p43, the end of Stuart Wagstaff's new centre phone no is missing. Can you provide it, please, as I would like to ring up for details?

**Dick Constable**

Try 01887 820498. There was a live website link in the January issue.

## Otter hunt

I wondered if you had, of recent times, had any contact or information about Ottersport. I was trawling the net a few weeks ago with regard to wood built K1s. (I was looking for a Scandinavian company called, I think, Struar or something similar. I would need a second mortgage from recollection but was curious.) I came across Ottersport. I have a very good but 20 year old plus Northampton built Ottersport and thought to give it a look. I have emailed, faxed and phoned numerous times, all to no avail.

Any ideas if they still exist and, if so, how I contact them? The web page states a PO box in the Bury St Edmunds area!

**Arthur Jones**

*Their designs went to Granta in Ramsey, Cambs, no longer in existence. A boatbuilder in Bury St Edmunds, who had been a supplier to Granta, bought some of the assets from the receiver but appears not to have done much with them. Paddle moulds were bought by AC Canoe Products of Chester and are now being used by them to manufacture plastic paddles in China. Struer in Denmark are expensive but are at the top end of the quality range with craftsmen built veneer kayaks. Try those companies appearing in this month's classified advertising plus Fyne (01539 444300) and Tyrone (01797 227707) for economical kits and plans. Our next issue will contain our annual buyers' guide.*

## Digging out slalom course information

I am currently a third year geography student at the University of Hull and, as part of my thesis, I am investigating the effects of using different subsurface river channel obstacles in the creation of surface water features in artificial white water courses. I am working in conjunction with the Nene facility in scale modelling their features and aiming to improve them. I do, however, need some background information and photographs. I recall several photographs and articles you published many years ago regarding the construction of the course. What I would ideally need is copies of the articles you have run about the construction of the course. I remember a particular article you ran about the building of Teesside white water course when it was still at the dug out concrete levels and, hopefully, similar stuff about the Nene, pretty much anything on the design, functioning or building of

these artificial courses, further, anything you had on the relation of artificial courses to actual rivers.

**Richard-James Stockdale**

*The following issues are still available:*

*Feb 95, construction of the Tees course.*

*Jul 95, Tees opening slalom, more on administration aspects than engineering.*

*Apr 99, construction of the Nene course.*

*Sep 99, the Nene course features at opening.*

## Search with a twist

I am looking for a kayak you featured about 5 years ago in your magazine. I can't seem to find it anywhere; it was quite a distinctive kayak. It was a multifunction kayak. It was a ride on top kayak which could be fitted with two outriggers on it plus a windsurf sail on it and it had a rudder. It also had storage space in the rear and front. When it was featured I think it was at a kayak or boat show but that is as much as I can remember. I think it was called something like a Twister.

Do you know of this kayak and, if so, what is it called and who makes it? Any help would be greatly appreciated.

**Richard Thompson**

*It was offered by Euro Kayaks, who are no longer in existence. It was shown at the 1998 International Canoe Exhibition and was featured on page 26 of our May 1998 issue.*



*The Euro Kayaks Twister.*



*Site progress photographs of the Nene slalom course under construction.*

# From marathon to the North American coast



*Winning the 2003 British championships at Woolacombe.*

*Campsite on the Maine Island Trail.*

Fencing, hockey, cricket and sub aqua engaged Alison Taylor in a fairly full sporting life as a Leicester student. However, a back injury was to slow her down. Doing a postgraduate course at what is now Brookes University, she met up with paddlers from Falcon, who trained with the club's rowers in their gymnasium. At Falcon she became the training partner of Lesley Kinch who really got her motivated, indeed, hooked. Not only did Alison get up early and train hard with the rowers, she would also paddle some 10km from where she was living in Kidlington to the club at the Riverside Centre, then collected her bike for a 3km ride up the hill to the college, reversing the journey in the evening. It was all fairly intensive and she really enjoyed it, getting into regional marathons and the Waterside series. She was a Division 6 K1 paddler and Division 4/5 in K2. In 1989 she took 8th place in the women's class of the Sella

Descent and won the Cares Canyon race during Falcon's club trip to northern Spain.

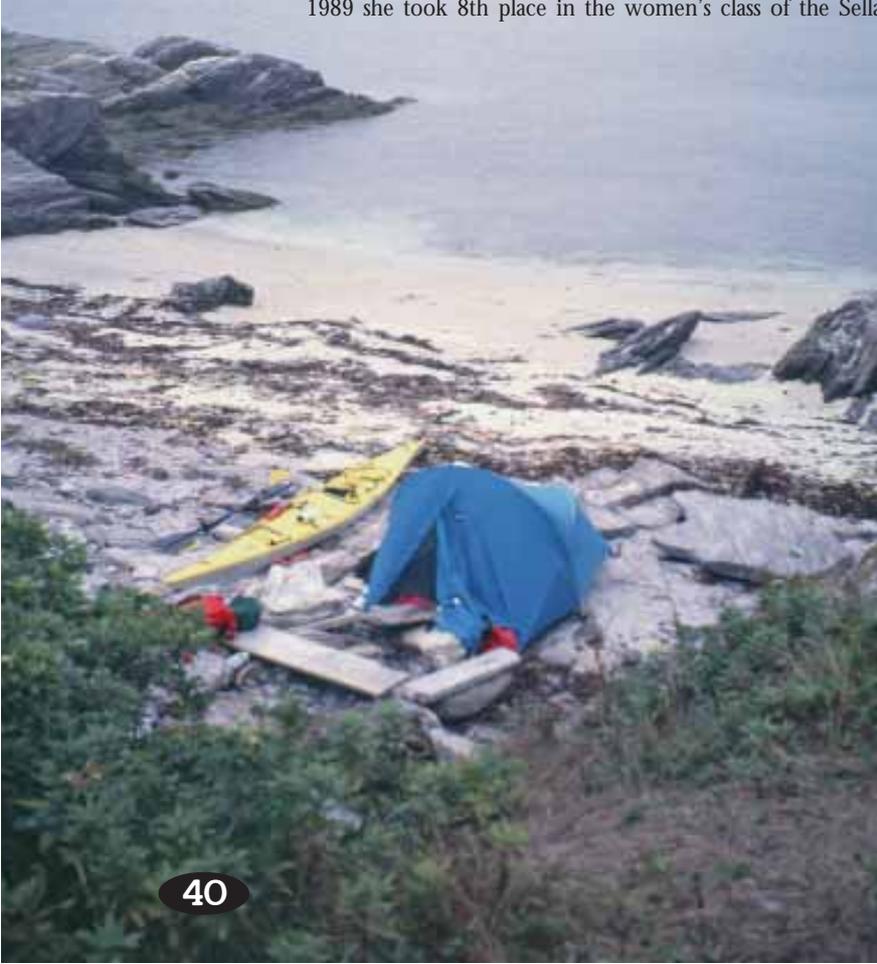
All this was to change with a move to Plymouth where she now works as a marine biologist for the Marine Biological Association. Laboratory based, she is studying the cell biology of phytoplankton. Talk of climate fluctuation and carbon balance will get most people thinking of rainforests yet half of the global photosynthesis takes place in the ocean. Alison is trying to understand how and why open ocean algal blooms flourish and what they mean for carbon dioxide absorption.

Opportunities for marathon racing around Plymouth were rather limited. Alison joined Tamar Canoe Club who were into white water, surfing and coastal paddling. Sea kayaks really gripped her, the best opportunity for long distance paddling. In 1991 she spent a fortnight with Mark Potts and Peter Crago, paddling around Cornwall from Bude to the Tamar, in the process raising £2,000 for the RNLI and Cornwall air ambulance.

Alison needed to broaden her skills base with white water and surf abilities. She was to be helped by John and Penny Allen, former slalomist and world surf kayak champion respectively, who have become firm friends to the point where Alison is a godparent of eldest daughter Jane and her partner is a godmother to another of the Allen children. Alison and Penny continue to make early morning midweek dashes down the white water of the middle section of the Dart whenever possible.

Reading, photography and travel are interests and she likes to fit in a couple of cultural experiences such as art gallery visits when away. In 1992 she did a 290km solo round the San Juan Islands near Vancouver before returning to take 3rd place in the women's wild water racing class of the Exe Descent.

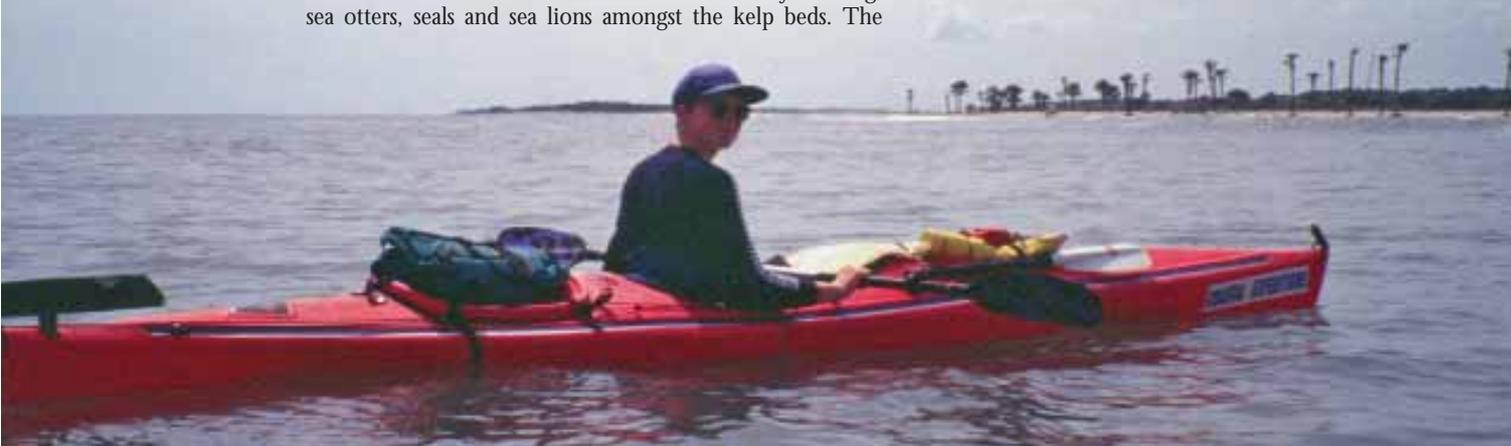
The following year she returned to the USA to work for six months in Boston where she met up with local paddlers and was able to win the Blackburn Challenge, a 32km race around Cape Anne. Sea kayaks were the transition from marathon, effectively backpacking on water. She is a happy person in a sea kayak, going all day at a reasonable pace. That August she did a 350km solo up the coastal Maine Island Trail from Portland, a trail where some islands have been bought by paddlers or camping is at least permitted. The Maine coast suffers severe fogs so this could be a stressful area but it brought its satisfactions in camp at the end of a long day. Alison bought her own sea kayak and a further satisfaction was persuading an airline to fly it home in a crate for £50.



*Coastal paddling in South Carolina.*

Back home she changed from Tamar Canoe Club on the far side of the bridge to the Port of Plymouth Canoe Association, only 10 minutes from where she works. She also worked on qualifications, getting her Advanced Sea Proficiency and Instructor status. She was on Senior Instructor training when she went abroad again, this time for two and a half years to the University of California in Davis near Sacramento. They had an excellent outdoor programme and she took groups in the pool as an instructor and guided trips on the coast, in the bays and on rivers up to grade 3, occasionally 4. She considers San Francisco to be one of the most beautiful cities in the world and often led groups in the Bay area. The South Fork of the American River was run on various occasions and she did a 32km overnight trip on the Carson River.

Alison had taken her plastic Hurricane out with her and used it for surfing. The 1998 Santa Cruz Kayak Festival gave her a first taste of bigger surf and she took 5th place overall in the intermediate class. She likes the venue and has now been there three times. The wildlife is very exciting, sea otters, seals and sea lions amongst the kelp beds. The



whole coast from Half Moon Bay to Monterey Bay is exceptional.

Back home in 1998, she did a bit of everything. A couple of years later she began to take part in regional surfing competitions in her plastic boat as she wanted to increase her surfing skills, her motivation to go out in bigger surf with improved confidence. She got herself a surf kayak, a revelation for its speed and stability, since when she has not looked back.

She was selected for the England team for the world championships in Ireland in 2003 and, at the age of 38, took the bronze medal in the International class and 5th place in the high performance. The women's entry at a regional level is not big and it would be nice to have more competition but in Ireland there was a broad entry and a high level of competition. She has been British champion

for the last two years and, this year, took the overall masters title at Fistrall.

Canoeing has been male dominated but the balance is now improving, including in freestyle; there are many excellent female paddlers out there but not many seem to make the transition into other disciplines like surf kayaks. With this in mind she will be running a women's surf development camp over Jul 24/25th in the southwest with Simon Hammond (current world champion in the high performance class) and Steve Bowens (England squad member). A weekend of surf skills and training, it will be run at almost zero cost and will finish with a mini competition where the participants will get a taster of what it is like to compete and take part in judging.

Another American trip last year had to be postponed and is now set for this March. She will compete in the Santa Cruz Surf Kayak Festival and then go on to Maui where she wants to find some surf which has not been ridden by a kayak. Generally, it will be a recreational trip and holiday.

The delay gives a problem in that the world championships have since been announced for Costa Rica in October and there may be a problem raising funds to get there. She has been supported by Nookie, Gath and Double Dutch for equipment but is seeking sponsorship for the travel.

Her local break at home is Bantham, which she enjoys even when the surf is not good. She also heads for St Ives and Newquay bays but needs to be selective to avoid the crowds as they have become busy all year. The introduction of better wetsuits has gone along with the growth in board surfing. There is now much more winter surfing and summer is madness, which can result in conflict between different watersports at the beach. To avoid the crowds she goes really early or gets on the water as the masses are leaving.

She also feels the need to leave on another long sea kayak trip. She enjoys the Pacific northwest and is tempted to look further north, maybe Vancouver Island or the coast of Alaska. The North American coast and its paddling potential seem to be acting as a steady attraction for her.



# First time



An unexpected trip to the Dalsland region of Sweden in early May provided me with the opportunity to try out kayaking for the first time in the most beautiful natural surroundings.

It was the first time I had visited Sweden and in many ways it was quite different from the image I had of the country. Yes, there were lots of trees, but instead of the serried rows of dark conifers I was expecting it was a delightful mix of silver birch, Scots pine and spruce with carpets of white wood anemones beneath.

Another surprise was the weather, gloriously warm sunshine, definitely shorts and T shirt weather. Finally, there were lakes *everywhere*. Naturally, the question of going out on the water soon came up. Would I like to give kayaking a try? Not only that but would I like to camp out wild on an island overnight? Of course I would!

As the day progressed and we got together the supplies we would need for the trip, I became increasingly worried about what I had let myself in for. I had no idea of my abilities as a canoeist and didn't know if I would be physically up to it. However, I had complete confidence in Dave and knew he would not take me anywhere too challenging for my first real experience of kayaking. (I would never go again if he did!). Also, the first day was to be a short 3km trip to the island where we were to stay overnight and I felt sure I could manage that and if the worst came to the worst we could just return the next day.



Bertil (who supplied the kayaks) dropped us off by the lake in the late afternoon and I was amazed by how much gear could be crammed into a kayak. I thought it would make it more difficult to paddle but Dave assured me it would make it more stable.

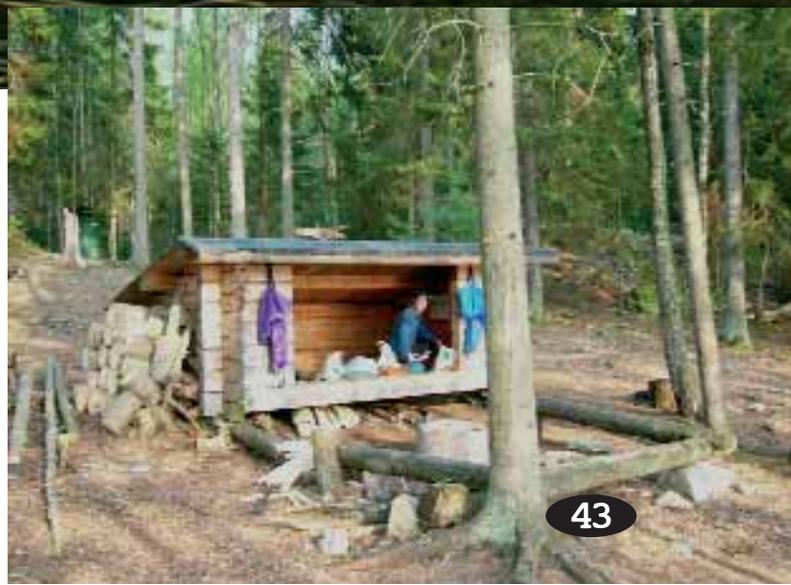
Now we came to the crunch time. I had to get in the boat. I think I managed it with reasonable dignity and so the next challenge was to move forward in a straight line. I eventually managed to get the hang of controlling the rudder with my feet and we began to make some progress out of the sheltered bay. It had been breezy all day but as we moved out into open water to cross to the island it became quite a battle to paddle into a strong headwind. It never crossed my mind that I might capsize. I was completely focussed on just getting to that island. What a relief it was when we moved into the lea of the island and the wind eased off. Dave soon spotted where we needed to land



and I could just make out a wooden shelter through the trees. It was certainly worth the effort to get there. I was amazed at what awaited us.

A neat, open fronted wooden shelter was tucked into the trees with a concrete fire pit in front and wood already cut with a saw and axe to cut it down into kindling, enough to bring out the he man in any male! We soon had a brew going on the Trangia we had brought with us while Dave set about lighting a fire. What a magical evening; we had the island to ourselves and we sat in the shelter with the fire burning near by, watching the sun set over the water.

Next morning we were awoken by a familiar sound, rain gently falling through the trees, an excuse for a lie in before facing the day ahead. The rain soon cleared, however, the sun came out again and after breakfast and a visit to the loo (primitive but much appreciated)







### Fact File

[www.vastsverige.com](http://www.vastsverige.com)  
[www.swedenactiveholidays.com](http://www.swedenactiveholidays.com)  
[www.cityairline.com](http://www.cityairline.com)  
[www.discover-the-world.co.uk](http://www.discover-the-world.co.uk)

English is spoken by most people. The cost of living is similar to that of the UK. They have warmer dryer summers and colder dryer winters than the UK. Dalsland, the Swedish lake district, is located just 1 1/2 to 2 hours north of Gothenburg.



that day on what seemed a vast expanse of water. Dave said the way to tackle it was to stay fairly close to the shoreline and head from one promontory to the next. This broke it down into manageable sections with a reward of a drink or some chocolate after each one! Lunchtime was spent basking in the sunshine on the rocks that lined the edge of the lake.

By now I was completely relaxed and was enjoying the peace and tranquillity of being on the water and being able to take in the beautiful surroundings of the treelined lake. It seemed no time before we reached the point we had prearranged for meeting Bertil, drew the boats up out of the water and had time for one final brew while waiting for him to pick us up.

**Margaret Wilding** *enjoyed the trip so much she travelled back to Dalsland for a seven day tour with Dave Halsall in July.*



we decided to explore the island. We found our way through the by now familiar mix of silver birch, Scots pine and spruce to the other side of the island where we came across another hut, complete with wood, saw and axe.

Back on the water I was faced with the prospect of covering 12km

*Gone fishin...*



07831 718789

[www.cobrakayaks.co.uk](http://www.cobrakayaks.co.uk)

# For those in peril

RNLI figures show that there were 73 lifeboat launches to kayakers and canoes in 2000; in 2003 there were 105. The most recent statistics show that there were 69 such launches between January and July 2004 alone. Is it a sign people are not taking enough precautions?

Not necessarily, according to Olly Sanders, a Level Five sea kayak coach with 20 years of paddling experience. 'I think the increase in rescues simply reflects the fact that the sport is on the up,' says Olly, who is based in Anglesey and was involved in producing a DVD entitled *Sea Kayak Safety*. 'Most get involved through courses and clubs so they know what they are doing.'

Of course, it shouldn't be assumed that kayak and canoe rescues involve rash rookies or reckless risk takers. Take the recent shout carried out by the Lymington lifeboat crew at the end of October. An experienced female kayaker was taking part in an assessment to become an instructor when she dislocated her shoulder. The RNLI was called to Hurst Beach where the casualty was being cared for by her colleagues. Because she found it too painful to be carried, the Lymington lifeboat crew created a ramp using the shingle so that she could walk to the lifeboat.

The kayaker was taken to Keyhaven Quay where an ambulance awaited and the volunteer lifeboat crew members later helped pick up her craft, too. Patrick Collins, senior tutor at Woodmill Outdoor Centre, said afterwards 'We were so impressed with the time in which the lifeboat reached us and the care and professionalism demonstrated by the crew. She is making a good recovery thanks to the crew's help.'

As with that example, many canoeists and kayakers needing assistance have experience but some rescues are also sharp reminders of what the elements are capable.

**The numbers of kayak and canoe incidents that RNLI lifeboats race to each year are steadily rising. Is that just down to the increasing popularity of the sport or are more paddlers taking chances?**

One of the first RNLI launches to canoeists in 2004 was off Whitby during March when two adults and a child were swamped in a strong westerly gale. The Whitby inshore lifeboat picked them up and took them to a waiting ambulance where they were treated for hypothermia.

Olly Sanders says 'It is important to remember to avoid offshore winds and travelling across bays where the wind can be funnelled. It is deceptive because, on the sea, the wind can be 30 per cent stronger as there is none of the friction you get inland or the shelter of the shore. It is important to get a weather report before you get in a canoe so you know what is going to happen later.'

In June 2004 the Portree RNLI lifeboat crew launched in search of a kayaker who had gone missing. He was eventually found, suffering from exhaustion, and the lifeboat crew took him and his craft back to the safety of the shore.

'Exhaustion can be avoided by understanding the conditions you are likely to face and do not do things beyond you,' says Olly. 'It sounds obvious but build your experience up slowly and consider the fitness and experience of the people you are with as well as your own.'

A lone canoeist suffering from hypothermia was picked up by a yacht and then transferred to the Holyhead RNLI lifeboat in May 2004. The canoeist had got separated from the rest of his party and began to be affected by the cold. Suffering from the cold is not uncommon according to Olly, who says 'Hypothermia can set in quickly. I tend to overdress for the conditions and it is, of course, worth storing warmer gear in the boat if possible.'

'It is also worth remembering that the sea is going to be warmer in autumn than at the start of the year. In spring, although it might be a warmer day, the water can be really quite cold.'

Another factor in kayak and canoe incidents is people paddling in unfamiliar areas. 'Listening to locals and getting some knowledge of the area is invaluable,' says Olly.

'I would advise getting a plan together of what the tides are going to do and where you are going to go. When you get to the beach, think about what is going on and be prepared to put your plan out of the window if necessary. You have to be flexible. Look at the forecast; if conditions are likely to get worse, think carefully about it and the ability of who you are with.'

From experience Olly is keen to point out that people should not be afraid to use the emergency services should they need them. As a precaution, giving the coastguard a rough idea of where you are going will help in the unlikely event that things do go wrong. 'I have spoken to people who are more frightened about ringing the coastguard than they are undertaking a major trip but I've always been treated well.'

Serious incidents in kayakers and canoes rarely occur but, when they do, there are, of course, the selfless RNLI lifeboat volunteers who are always on call to help those in peril. 'For me, working on the sea as I do, the RNLI is a really valuable asset. To have an organization working with the coastguard to get you out of trouble is very reassuring,' enthuses Olly. 'We do not have to pay for that service but the RNLI does rely on the public to stay afloat and they need our support.'

Signing up for Offshore membership is one way to support the organization's work; it is designed for leisure sea users who are most likely to need the services of the RNLI. For more information on supporting the charity, telephone 0845 1226999 or log onto [www.rnli.org.uk](http://www.rnli.org.uk).

## Rory Stamp

● The RNLI has released its *Extreme Sea Safety Advice* DVD (Aug, p33), featuring surf kayaking advice. The DVD contains a wealth of practical tips and straightforward safety advice from leading extreme sportspeople including world surf kayak champion Simon Hammond. To obtain your free copy of *Extreme Sea Safety Advice* call 0800 328 0600.

● A wealth of sea safety advice is also available via the RNLI's new interactive website at [www.rnli.org.uk/seasafety](http://www.rnli.org.uk/seasafety).

The site is packed with information and resources to ensure that free safety advice is available in one easily accessible location for all sea users.

The site means that it's now easier for sea users to get their hands on the latest safety advice. It's easy to navigate and offers sea users instant access to a wealth of crucial safety news and information.

From booking a free flare or sea survival demonstration online to downloading any of the RNLI's safety publications or browsing the latest safety news, the new website provides a one stop shop for all who want to stay safe while enjoying themselves on the water.

For those who prefer to receive a paper version of any of the RNLI's free safety publications, copies can be ordered online.

The easy to use site also provides region by region listings of events where the RNLI's Sea Safety team will be on hand to offer advice and demonstrations.

The *Sea Safety* CD-ROM is available on the website, giving the chance to learn about topics such as the rules of the road, buoys and markers and navigation lights. The RNLI's *Extreme Sea Safety Advice* DVD is also available via the site.







## *Something will turn up*

First descent of the Cauvery River in southern India.

*Part 1 - Woks of sand and a friendly sniffer*



I was standing in front of the police sub inspector's desk; to my right a number of prisoners looked out from the cells. Their hands grasped the vertical bars and their little faces were thrust into the gaps between the bars in the classical prisoner pose. This was obviously going to be the highlight of their day. I cast a brief smile in their direction. I reckoned I needed all the friends I could get; after all 'I could be joining you shortly,' I thought.

I had been taken into custody and Ian, my partner in crime, was now some miles away, guarding our possessions. My camera was emptied of its contents; the sub inspector had offered to develop the film. I thought that was most kind. (I never saw the film again.) I was told by the officer that we couldn't continue our journey; we had to get permission. I was dumbstruck as my mind raced to counter the threat to our ambitions.

The journey that was now in the balance was one being undertaken by Ian and me, canoeing the Cauvery River in southern India. My work from time to time in the southern Indian city of Bangalore had led me into contact with the Cauvery River. As a canoeist I was immediately impressed by the river and had decided on first acquaintance that I would at some time paddle the river from its source in the Western Ghats to the Bay of Bengal on the east coast of India, a distance of over 855 kilometres.

On investigation it soon became clear that there was little reliable information about the river and so, over time, I pieced together data gleaned from various sources and from my own exploratory visits to various sections of the river. In the end, still with more questions than answers, Ian and I decided that our ambitions couldn't be restrained any longer and so, on one late afternoon in January, Ian and I found ourselves at the head of the river, barely two kilometres from the source, with my blue open canoe loaded up with all our possessions. The river was just 3m wide and 10cm deep at this point, barely enough water to float the canoe as a bemused group of locals waved while we set off into the sunset. It wasn't long before I was thrashing around in thorny trees and branches that were blocking the river and dripping blood everywhere from the scratches on my arms.

In the hour before sunset we managed 400m and camped sheepishly on the outskirts of the village.

### Filling giant woks with sand

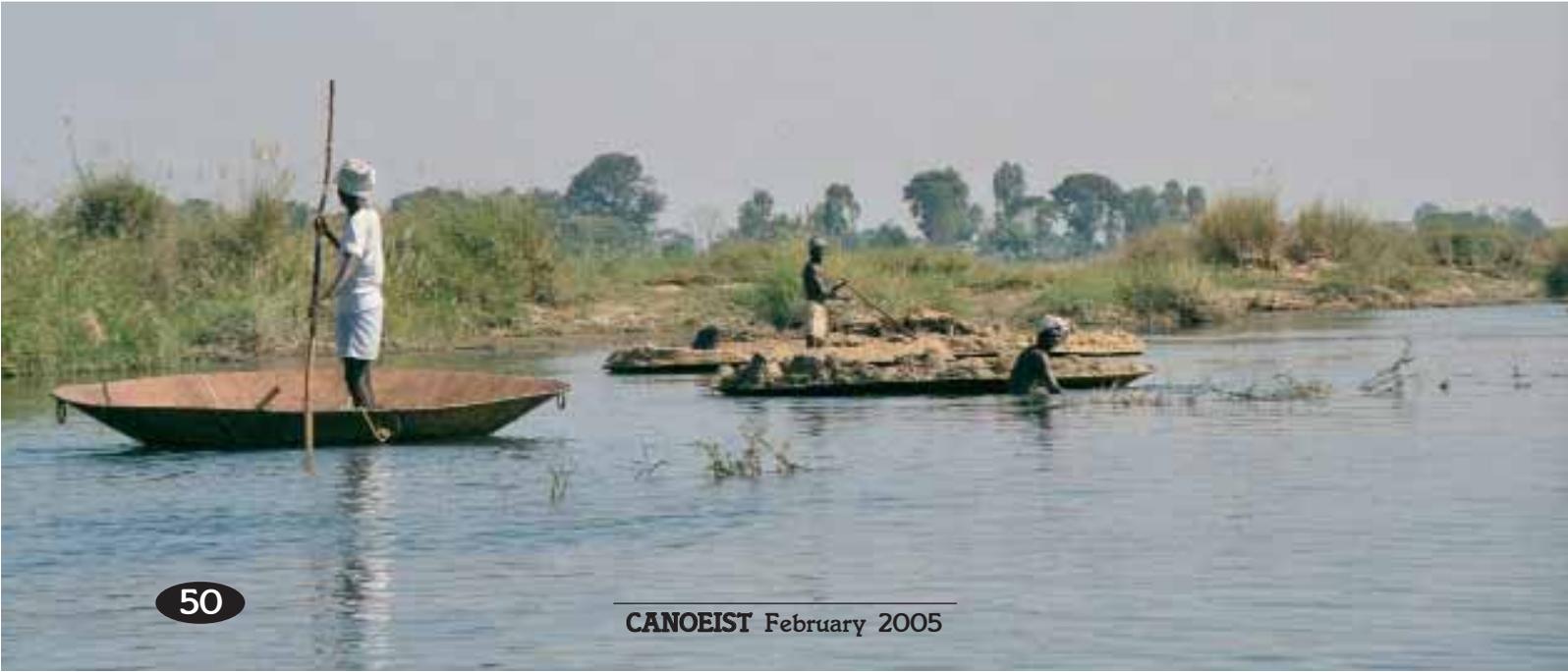
We cheered up next morning, after a cup of tea, and set off. The river was kinder to us now; there were none of those nasty scratchy bushes we had come across on first acquaintance with the river and which had taken their toll on my arms. The river was rarely more than 30cm deep but this was plenty for us. We paddled through lush vegetation between steep sided valleys cloaked with tropical vegetation and interspersed with coffee plantations. The coffee shade trees of teak, silver oak and rosewood, covered with creeping peppers and cardamom, towered over us at times. The vegetation alongside the river was dense but from time to time human activity on the river was apparent. Local fishermen had constructed numerous elaborate fish traps that completely spanned the river. Each comprised a low fence that stood about 20 to 30cm above the water, made by driving stakes into the bed of the river and weaving split bamboo in and out of the posts down to the riverbed. In each fence there was a single gateway on the downstream side of which was inserted a conical wickerwork basket which was about a metre long. On many of the traps a low archway of twigs and grasses had been constructed over the gate. This served no special purpose that we could see other than to add some architectural value to the whole construction. Many of the traps we saw, and there were many, had fallen into disuse and, as a result, it was easy to forge a way past by paddling over the fence at its lowest and weakest point.

We were continually in the company of black capped kingfishers. There seemed to be relays of them, handing us on from one bird to the next as we passed down each section of the river. Other birds on the banks and above included bee eaters, racket tailed drongos, white wagtails and little cormorants. Wheeling around above were buzzards and the very beautiful brahminy kite. On one occasion we were surprised to see what we believed to be large black birds sitting in the branches of trees lining the banks. As we got nearer we realized that our birds were, in fact, a colony of fruit bats. They circled us in total silence like some primeval beasts. It was difficult for us to imagine but the wingspans of these creatures were up to one metre.

There were numerous sections of easy white water, about grade 1 to 2, and rock garden sections where the stream would weave a complex

*Streamlined ox powered haycart.  
Stalls of very attractive and colourful fruit and vegetables.  
Hands on fishing technique.*







pattern through a field of boulders. The water quality was excellent and we were absolutely entranced by our surroundings.

We were now increasingly seeing a group of individuals who are making their living from the river. We called them the 'sand getters of the Cauvery'. These characters spent their days in or under the water, digging the sand from the riverbed and loading it into what can only be described as enormous sheet steel woks. One or two men dressed only in their underpants or loincloths would work with each wok. The lucky ones would be standing in water up to their waists and could load their woks by just bending down and digging from the river bed. The less lucky ones stood in water up to their necks and had to dive to the bottom of the river with shovels and heave their loads to the surface and then over the sides of their woks. The sand was loaded first into the centre of the wok and then around the rim to form a continuous wall of sand. The wok was declared full when the water lapped within a few millimetres of the top edge. The fully loaded wok was then punted with a long pole to the bank where the sand was offloaded into waiting trucks or ox carts.

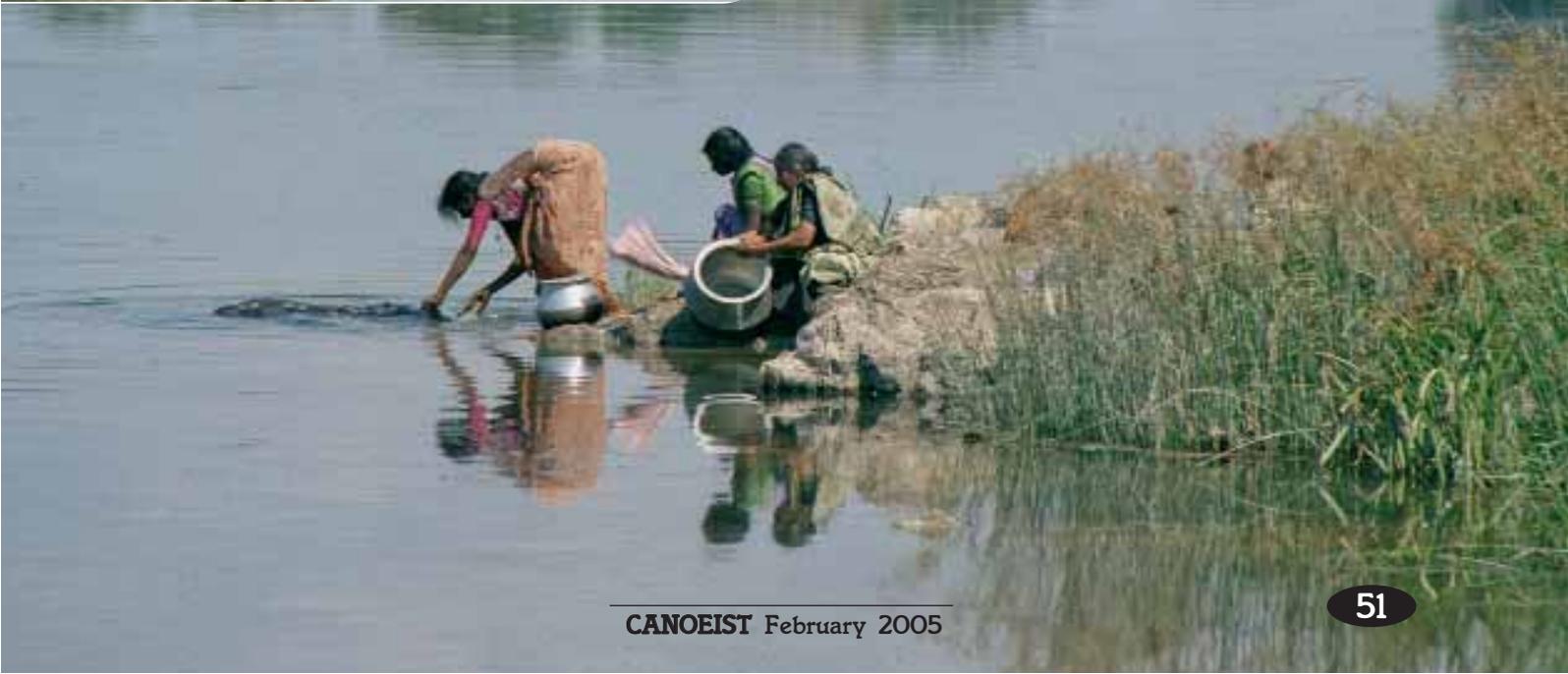
The river was now taking on a more mature feel as we moved from the hill country into the plains. The river was characterized by long sweeping bends, wooded sections and open banks, rice fields and banana plantations.

### In prison

On the fifth day of our journey we entered a major discontinuity on the river, if you can call it that, the Krishnarajarsagar Reservoir. Local fishermen were out and about in their coracles, fishing with nets and tending hand lines, and could be seen as little black dots on the glassy water in every direction we looked. We would get a cheery wave from each one we passed and an enquiry regarding our destination. We thought 'The Bay of Bengal' would sound pretentious so we settled for Srirangapatnam, a town about 15km downstream of the barrage. The mudflats along the sides of the reservoir were home to numerous wading and river birds, glossy ibis, egrets, herons, open billed storks, yellow billed storks, spoonbills, plovers and lots more. Cormorants perched on rocks near the banks with their wings outstretched to dry in the sunshine and observed our progress.

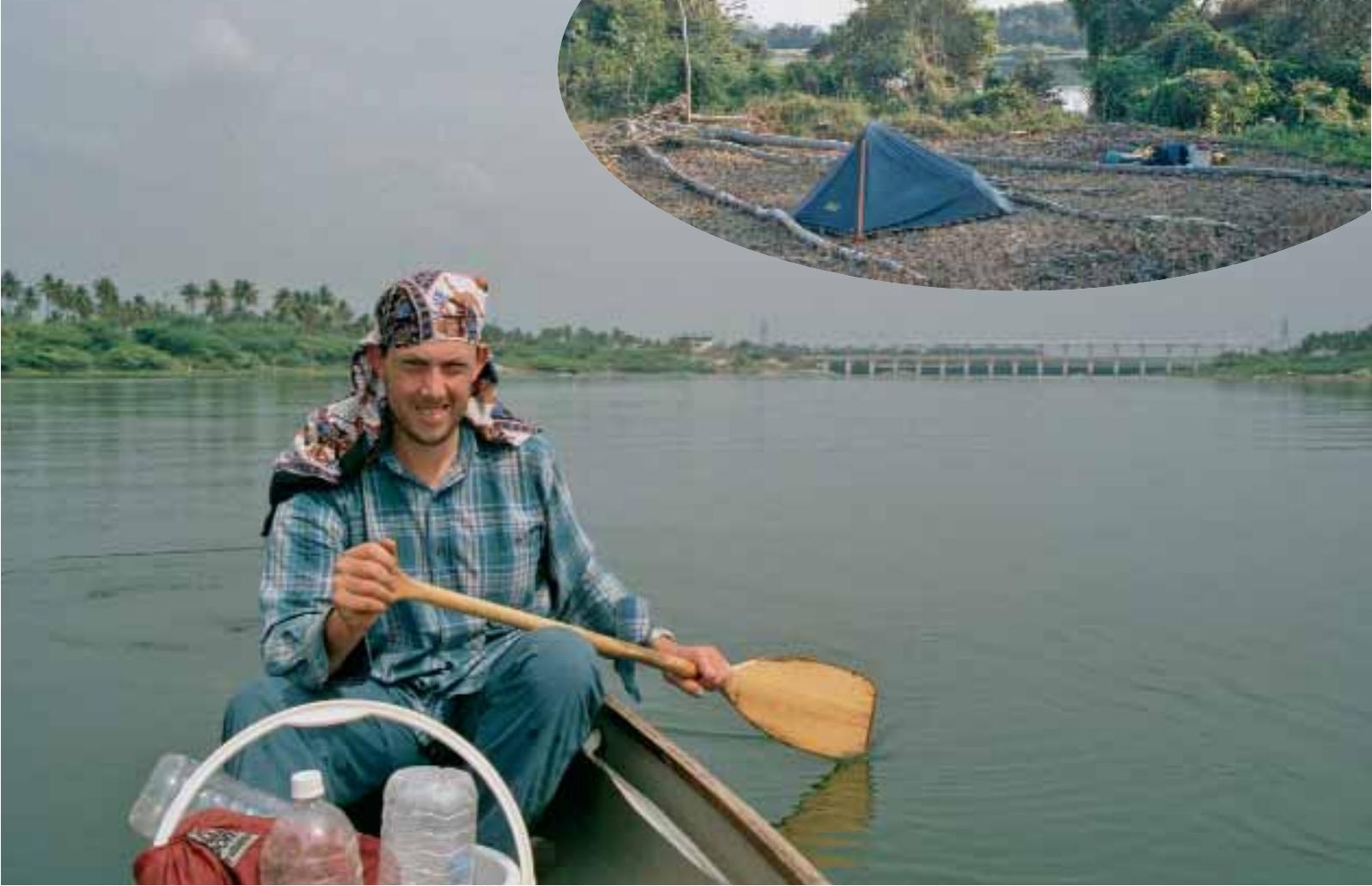
At long last the barrage came into view. At first it was a thick black

*The river supplies everything from aggregates to water for washing.*





*As Ian and Mike saw each other and a typical campsite.*





line on the horizon but slowly, slowly as we got nearer, features became apparent on the wall itself. I knew that our problems were only just about to begin as the situation with regard to the dam itself has always been sensitive. At the time of our journey Pakistan and India were sparring over Kashmir with each pushing the other further and further towards the brink of war. Also the 11th September business was making everyone jumpy and so didn't help to make our predicament any better. Anyway, we had decided, for better or for worse, probably the latter, that a direct approach to the wall was to be our course of action.

No one appeared as we tied up to a stone pillar at the side of the steps. 'I'll go and see who's about,' I said to Ian. I mounted the steps and looked around, still no one, so I walked over to the gatehouse that guarded the entrance to the barrage wall. It was still quite early and a policeman and one of the barrage workers were sitting crosslegged on the floor behind the counter, tucking into their breakfast. They looked up as a result of my intrusion. This, I thought, was going to be the difficult bit. 'Good morning,' I said, trying to be positive, and smiled. 'A friend and I are boating down the Cauvery River and we would like to take our boat out at your steps.' Silence. I regained their attention and said 'Would you like to come with me and have a look?' They nodded in agreement and I led the way back to the water.

The policeman and the workers stood and stared; the total lack of expression on their faces gave the game away. They didn't know what on Earth to make of us or to do with us. Should they lock us up or shake our hands? It was patently obvious that they were not used to receiving waterborne visitors; no one else had dared to be so bold! We carried all our gear past the silent crowd and placed it by a flowerbed near the top of the steps. We hauled the boat out and struggled up the steps. They still stood there, not offering to help, muttering amongst themselves and eyeing us suspiciously. Officialdom would have to decide our fate and at that moment in the jury was still out.

Just when we were wondering what was going to happen next Goldie appeared. He was a friendly looking dog with a big wet nose and a tail that didn't stop wagging. 'Well, at least someone likes us,' I thought as he muzzled up to us. Then the penny dropped; we realized what Goldie was as he began to give us both a good sniffing. Goldie was the bomb dog, probably trained to sniff out Semtex or some other explosives used to blow dams apart. Soon all our gear was strewn over the floor as Goldie gave it the once over. Not surprisingly, we were given a clean bill of health. In fact, the nearest thing we had to explosives were some green chillies left over after the previous day's curry.

I turned to Ian and suggested that we make a move to get the gear outside the compound. We started to do so and, thank goodness, no one insisted that we stop. The barrage workers were still standing around, expressionless, waiting for someone to give them a lead as to how to react whilst the policeman was having an animated conversation on his two way radio. The outcome was not hard to predict so there I was, standing in front of the police sub inspector, staring failure in the face. 'Permission?' I said.

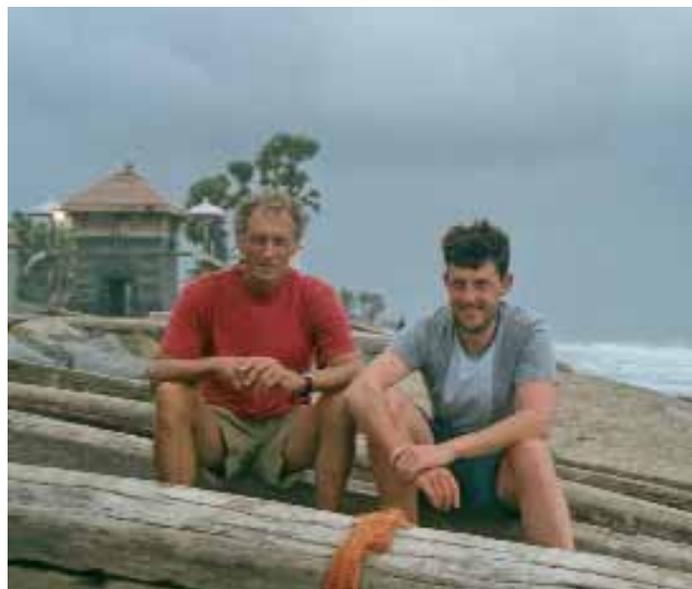
'Yes, permission', he replied.

'Where from?' I enquired.

'Bangalore,' he replied. I sighed and stared at the prisoners in their cage across the way. My mind was racing as I thought 'What now?'

**Mike Norman**

*Self supported descent of the Cauvery River, south India from its source to sea in a single open canoe over a period of 25 days by Ian Grant and Mike Norman of the Cambridge Canoe Club, covering a total distance of 855km. The river rises in the Western Ghats and meets the Bay of Bengal at Poomphar in Tamil Nadu. It is believed to be the first complete descent of the river by canoe.*



Mike Norman photographs

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# Letters

## We did well

From **Pete Knowles and George Woods**, Keswick, Cumbria.

Just to let you know that Paul, George and I agreed to close the bank account and donate the remaining funds from London River Rats to the Tsunami Disaster Appeal. £387 was transferred today. I hope everyone approves.

Many thanks for your support and work over the years. Great talks, great company, great times and nothing but good memories. I think we did well.

## North Sea to Aegean Sea

From **Harry Teasdale**, [harry.teasdale@zonnet.nl](mailto:harry.teasdale@zonnet.nl).

I am an Englishman living in the Amsterdam, planning a journey by canoe from here to the Aegean Sea and hoping to find a travelling companion(s).

The intended route is to be via the Dutch, Belgian and French waterways to the Rhine at Strasbourg, then a short distance overland to the Danube and on to Ingolstadt, there to join up with the Tour International Danubien which is an organization that each year goes from Ingolstadt to Silistra in Bulgaria. There the TID stops and I shall continue to the Black Sea and the Aegean. How far I get will depend on a number of things, not the least of which will be the passing seasons.

The TID sets off in late June so it becomes the deciding factor for my departure from the Netherlands; my reason for starting off from Amsterdam is, not having canoed in years plus approaching my sell by date, I need the practice. Others may not so they could always start off at a later date from Ingolstadt.

I have experience in this sort of travel, having, two years ago, taken a small boat from the North Sea to the Black Sea via the Rhine-Main-Danube, then two abortive attempts at canoeing the Niger in West Africa, whilst I have already, in the distant past, canoed the length of the Danube to the Black Sea.

Anyone seriously interested can contact me via email.

## Remembering Andy

From **Wendy Loy** (*née Jackson*).

You won't know me or recognize my name but I am Andy Jackson's younger sister. It is great to see Andy's overview in January's issue. My mum and my older sister (Claire Sumpter) have also been downloading and are thrilled to print out a great article. Andy was a wonderful brother to be proud of and we miss him dreadfully. I used to paddle with Andy when we were teenagers but then I went to uni, got married and had kids and all that 'boring' stuff... You can't get a more fun uncle for your children though than 'big Uncle Andy'!

Thank you for your work.

From **Kate Jackson** (*Andy's mum*), Houston, Johnstone, Renfrewshire.

I have successfully downloaded, as have his 2 sister's who also sent for it!

It is brilliant.

Thank you so much for all your kindness.

We are doing OK but still have bad times. I think we probably still don't really believe it; he was such a lovely guy.

## The missing part

From **B Hill**.

Now let me get this clear. The best magazine is no longer placed in front of the public for want of financial support equivalent to one person's wages or thereabouts. The public no longer see the only magazine covering the whole of canoeing, the only one turning up to a lot of our events and the only one addressing our access problems. So promotion of canoeing has been reduced. At the same time the BCU are employing lots of people to promote canoeing and deal with access with not much to show for it and the canoe trade have some as well, I believe. It doesn't add up. Am I missing part of the story?

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Upon a bonny milk-white steed  
That drank out of the Tyne;  
And a' was for her Ladie Maisry  
To take her hyne and hyne.



*The Plains of Heaven by John Martin.*

# River Tyne Tynedale Section

Where flows  
reached  
their largest



From Bardon Mill (Nov guide) the River South Tyne continues quietly at first with herons, moorhens and mallards plus occasional stands of alder trees.

The Carlisle to Newcastle railway crosses on a bridge with central piers which have pipes down their corners, connected by hoses at the top, perhaps keeping an eye on scour which can be a problem.

The bridge at Crow Hall has a graceful slender stone arch but with a series of wide vertical slots between the stones in the left abutment. These look too

The railway crosses back on a bridge which has had its piers protected by tipping stone around them. The stone restricts the flow and produces decent standing waves beneath the bridge and beyond.

A bit further on there are columns on each side of the river which clearly supported a suspension footbridge at some time in the past. Now they look even more uncomfortable than the lone cormorant.

A former resident of Haydon Bridge was artist John Martin, whose pictures even sold to royalty. In old age he offered some to the village as the basis of a local art



*Haydon Bridge with its weir.*

irregular to be for drainage yet they ought to be in compression so that any movement enough to give gaps

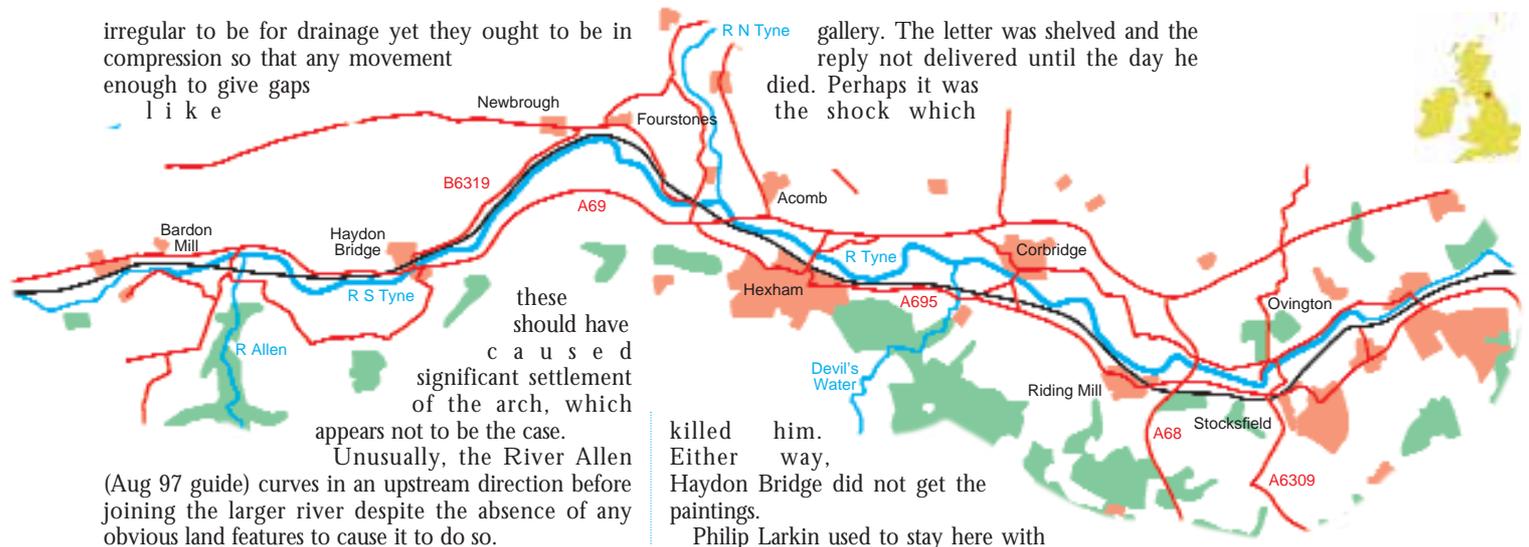
Like these should have caused significant settlement of the arch, which appears not to be the case.

Unusually, the River Allen (Aug 97 guide) curves in an upstream direction before joining the larger river despite the absence of any obvious land features to cause it to do so.

gallery. The letter was shelved and the reply not delivered until the day he died. Perhaps it was the shock which

killed him. Either way, Haydon Bridge did not get the paintings.

Philip Larkin used to stay here with



Access and passage are not necessarily permitted and safe under all conditions.

Monica Jones and dedicated his first book, *The Less Deceived*, to her.

It is one of the few villages to straddle the river. Below the large old arch bridge is a full width sloping weir which drops half a metre and can be shot in most places although banks of stones beyond need to be taken in the channels between them. The run will be better if these banks are covered. The Anchor and Gateway hotels face each other at opposite ends of the bridge. The A69 now cuts across obliquely below it and the B6319 sets out to follow the river to Fourstones. Haydon church may date from 1190 with a 14th century chantry added and a west end from 1882. There are three round headed lancet windows and a font made from a Roman altar.

The river continues with sections up to grade 2 alternating with flatter sections. The dipper finds enough rapids to enjoy, there are shelducks and the banks are fringed in places with beeches and birches.

As the A69 comes back to the road there is a gauging weir with a 200mm step right across the river. The precedes Haydon Spa rapid on the next left corner, grade 2, big and bouncy in spate for about 100m. Below on the right bank is the spa well itself.

wall, not the last on this river. On the other side of the railway is Newbrough where, in the 16th century, Old Meg was burnt alive as a witch, a stake being driven through her heart to stop her soul from wandering.

The skeleton of a large tree lies in the centre of the river at Fourstones but the river is wide here and it is easily avoided. The Stanegate Roman road passes through the village and past a hill with a settlement site on top and an aerial near by at High Warden. A papermill on the bank comes as the first conspicuously industrial premises on the river.

A large triangular bird box on a long pole at Bridge End precedes another crossing by the railway in an area which was once quite a significant railway junction with lines to Allendale Town and Kielder, another set of piers standing just downstream in the river. Those connections may have gone but the major confluence remains where the River North Tyne (Aug guide) comes in to merge with the River South Tyne to form the River Tyne proper. The section from here to Hexham is probably the most paddled section of the River Tyne, usually by tired playboaters at dusk as they drift the relatively flat waters back from the Warden Gorge to Hexham.



*High banks of trees give the Allerwash Gorge a gloomy feel.*

Grade 2 stone rapids with occasional rocks lead past Allerwash Hall. The Allerwash Gorge has the railway running along the left side above a substantial retaining

The A69 passes over for a final time and there are the remains of more bridge piers in the river as more small rapids and islands are passed. On the north side of the



*Natural sculpture in wood near Fourstones.*



*Hexham Canoe Club in a town used to resisting invaders.*

river at Hexham is the Hermitage while the south bank is a golf course and the Tyne Green Country Park, the base for the Tyne Tour at the beginning of November, one of the country's largest canoeing events each year. The main carrying Hexham's water supply passes under the river here. Last month's floods, the biggest for a decade, scoured under it, causing it to break.

There are two boat launches. The river is considered to be paddleable if the lower one is covered and enjoyable if the upper one is underwater. Hexham Canoe Club have their base by the river next to the Tyne Green Café. Other activities here include rowing, windsurfing and angling.

Hexham takes its name from the Old English *hagusteald* ham, bachelor estate. Its most important building is its abbey, founded in 674 by St Wilfred and built using stone from Hadrian's Wall at Corbridge, including a tombstone to Flavius. It was the finest abbey north of the Alps and one of the first stone churches in northern Europe. Altered after 1113 by Augustinian

canons and by the Victorians and Edwardians, most of it remains from 1180 to 1250 and it has been the parish church from 1537. It was attacked by Bruce and Wallace, Hexham being where the Scots first attacked Charles I. Until the Dissolution in 1539 there was a 1.6km wide sanctuary area around the priory, marked with crosses. The church could fine anyone for taking a fugitive from this area while taking someone from the 7th century Frith stool, St Winifred's chair, carried the penalty of excommunication. The abbey has an exceptional 7th century Anglo Saxon crypt, 15th century paintings, mediaeval carvings, misericords, a Saxon chalice and apse, a Roman font and a haunted Augustinian night stair.

It was not a safe haven for criminals, however. In 1330 the Archbishop of York constructed England's first purpose built prison for the Border Reivers. With 2.4m thick walls, it was used until 1824 and now houses a museum of the Border Reivers in the 15/16th century with weapons, armour, stocks and the dungeon on show.

The 15th century Moot Hall has a tunnel vaulted basement and a gallery for local artists. The elegant Queen's Hall Arts Centre contains the Tynedale Tapestry. Each May there is a Hexham Gathering of pipers and poets in the town, aimed at young people. War poet Wilfred Wilson Gibson was a resident.

There is a mast towards the town centre, near which is the station with interesting cast iron roof trusses.

The A695 is taken over Smeaton's bridge of 1780 with its 11 - 16m arches, all but two of which collapsed in 1782. It was rebuilt to Smeaton's design and is similar to his bridges in Coldstream and Perth. It had further major strengthening in 1965 when the width was increased from 5.5 to 10.7m by adding cantilevered reinforced concrete footways along the outside. The





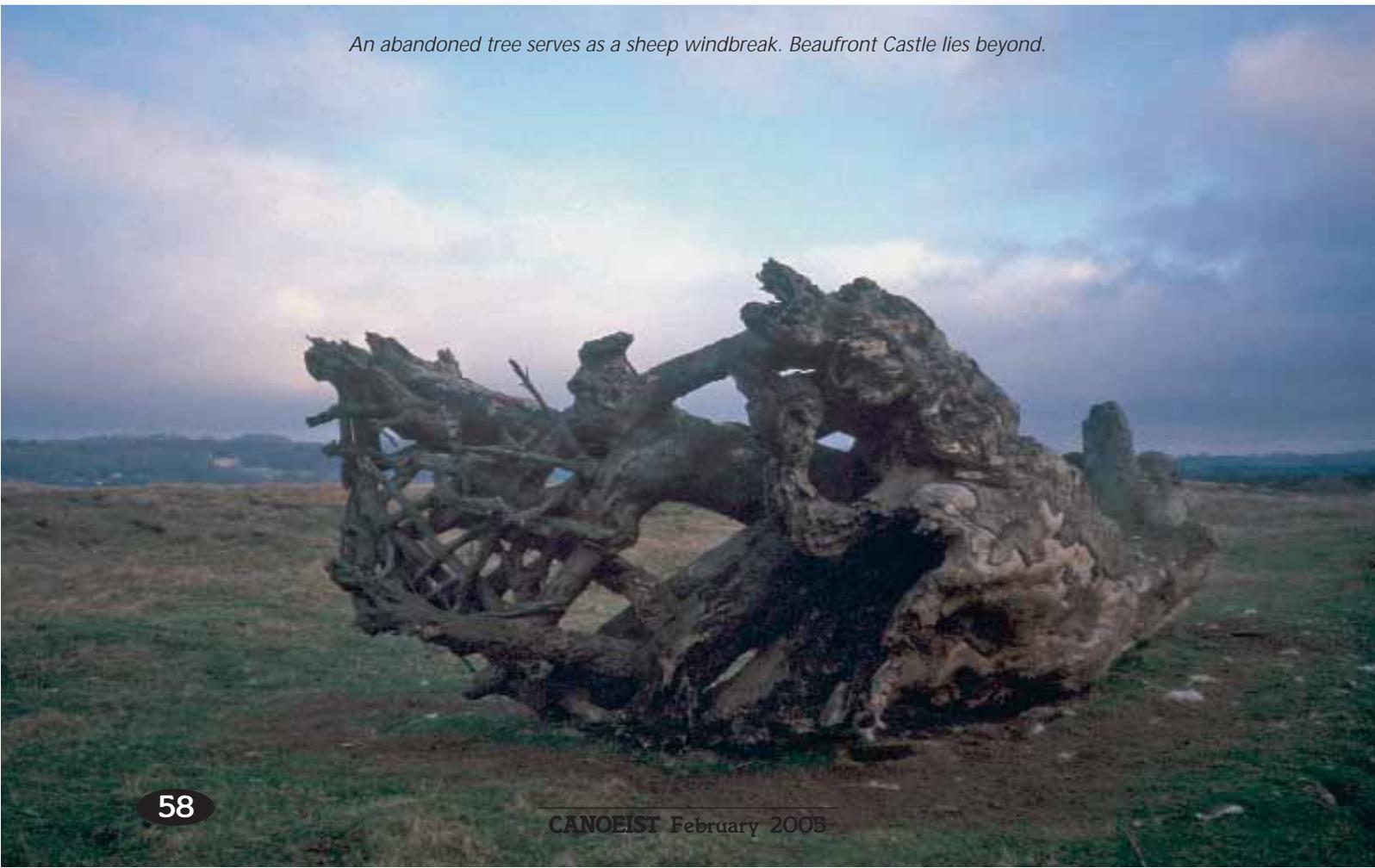
*The unpleasant weir below Smeaton's bridge in Hexham.*

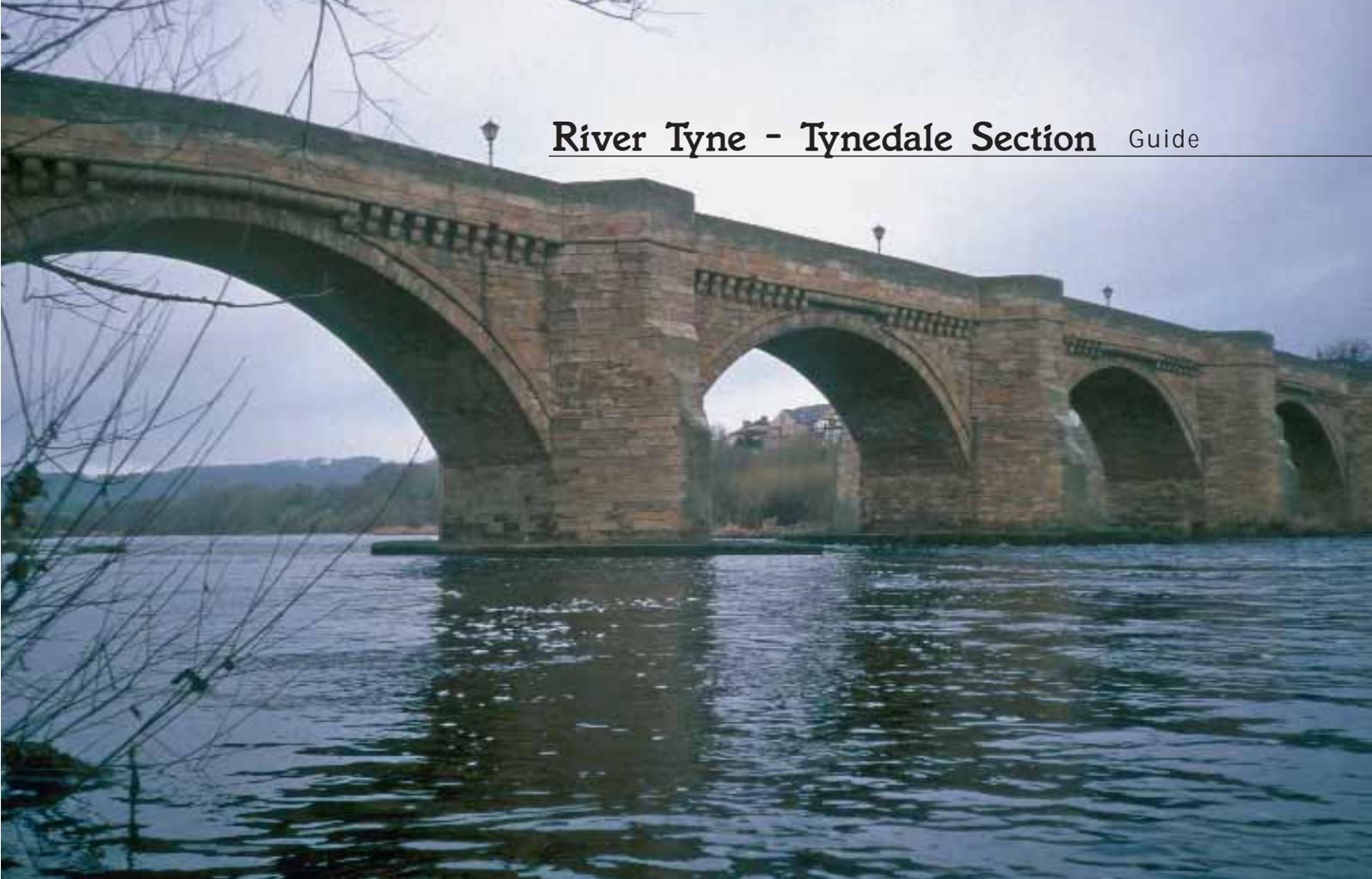
bridge is built across the top of a large weir which begins with a slope and ends with a vertical drop of over a metre into a stopper. There is a fish ladder in the centre and diagonal ribs which ensure sideways entry to the stopper. On the right is a step. After inspection, it may

be shootable as conditions dictate but it can be lethal in spate.

Bridge End on the left bank has a pulping mill from which the aroma of pine oil emanates with a northerly wind.

*An abandoned tree serves as a sheep windbreak. Beaufront Castle lies beyond.*





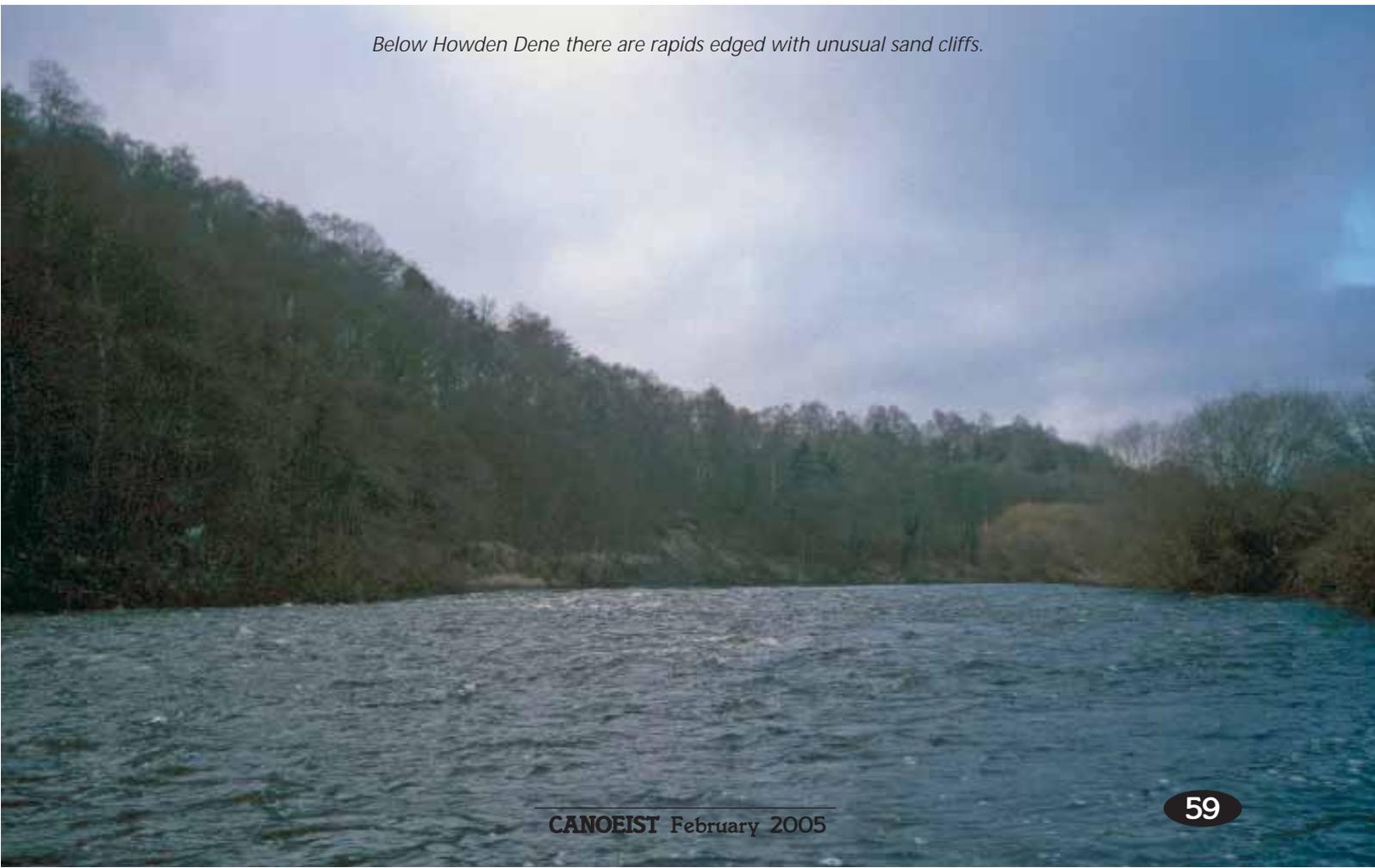
*The oldest bridge across the Tyne at Corbridge, being the only one to survive the 1771 flood.*

Rapids do not generally get above grade 1 to Corbridge, probably the largest being a small diagonal weir producing a standing wave above Broomhaugh Island, itself 8km above Broomhaugh. Powerlines cross where rabbits have

dug a warren in a field on the left side and gorse adds colour on the right.

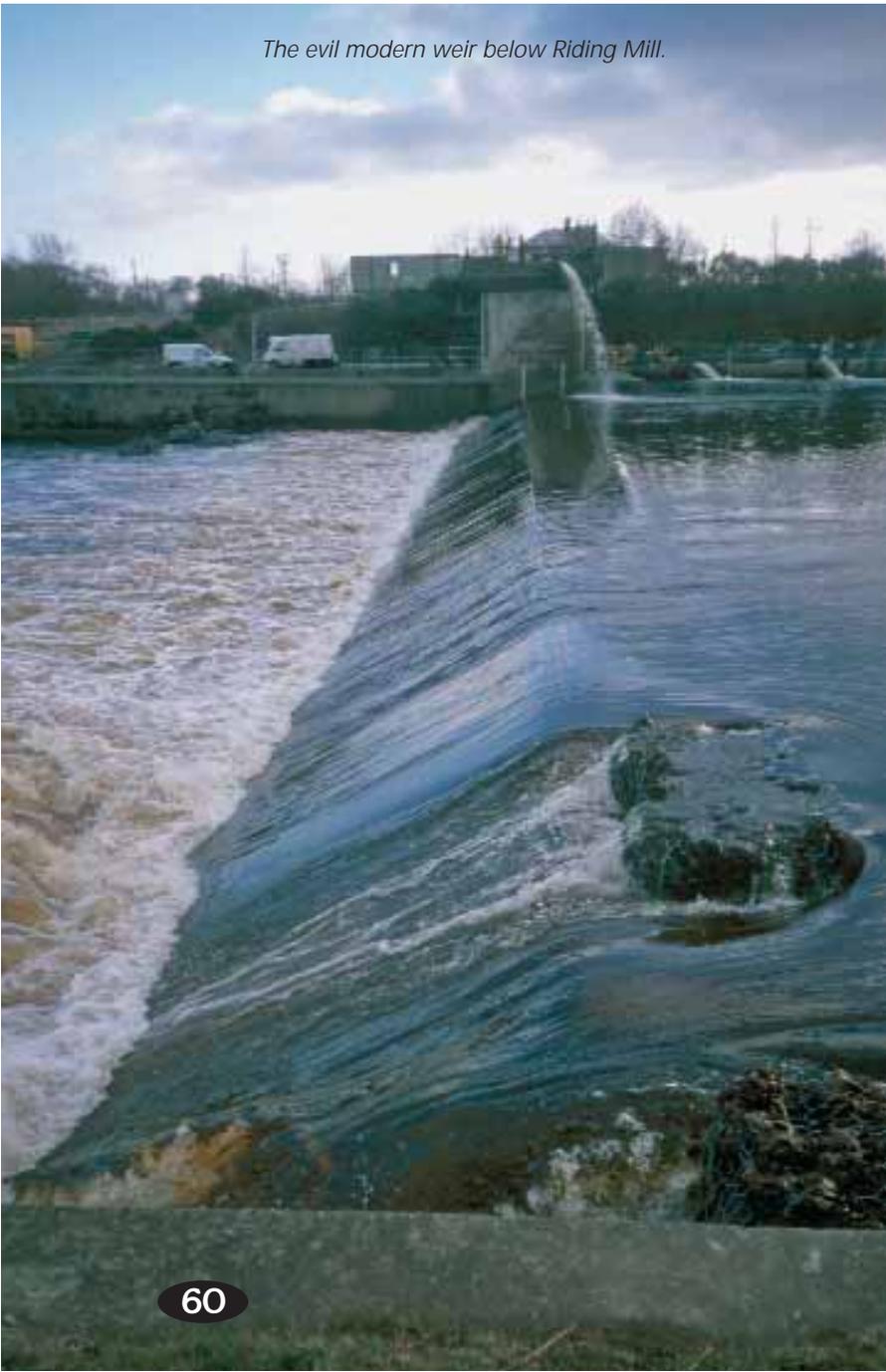
The river turns in front of Beaufront Castle while Red House was the site of a Roman fort nearer to the river. Salmon jump in the river or lie

*Below Howden Dene there are rapids edged with unusual sand cliffs.*





*The massive intake structure for the Tyne - Tees Tunnel.*



*The evil modern weir below Riding Mill.*

dead along the edges. Gulls soar above, looking for food.

Devil's Water (May 99 guide) enters so inconspicuously it might not be noticed at all. On the left is the Corstopitum Roman fort dating from 139 to guard the important road junction for Carlisle, York and Scotland. There are extensive remains of the Roman supply base which became a garrison town. It supplied Hadrian's Wall 4km to the north, with



*The castle at Bywell, near where*

military compounds, the largest Roman building in Britain, the two best preserved granaries in Britain, strong room, shops, temples, houses, fountain and aqueduct, the largest settlement in the area. The museum houses the Corbridge lion, a stag stone fountain head and the Corbridge Hoard which explained Roman legionary armour.

The present Corbridge dates from Saxon times, the 14th century Saxon church of St Andrew having a vicar's Pele tower and an archway of stones from the Roman fort. The town's main feature is its 17th century stone bridge, the only one on the Tyne to survive the 1771 flood. Small rapids under it can be run anywhere but the flow beyond the bridge is on river right.

There are rugby pitches on the right, opposite Howden Dene, around which the river loops. Sandpits are in the vicinity and cliffs of sand into which many bird nesting holes have been burrowed yet the river at their foot has respectable rapids down to what was a cable bridge, now just a forlorn abutment.

Not much is seen of Riding Mill on the right bank and less of Styford Hall opposite it. Very conspicuous, however, is the large intake building for the Tyne - Tees Tunnel which takes water south and discharges it into the River Tees at Romaldkirk. The flow makes a left turn to the most appalling piece of engineering design on the river, an associated modern weir with nearly vertical drop, closed in ends and long towback, absolutely lethal. Pieces of formwork and other construction debris litter the banks downstream towards the viaduct taking the A68 over.

Between Bywell and Stocksfield and their respective

halls is a small drop creating a decent wave. The river swings right immediately in front of the remains of the castle in which Richard III probably hid during the Wars of the Roses. Pleasant grade 2 rock studded rapids run down under the bridge carrying the B6309. However, tree trunks wrapped round its stone pillars 3m up suggest it can have other moods. Indeed, 1,586m<sup>3</sup>/s was recorded here, the highest flow ever measured on any river in England or Wales.

More placidly, the Northumbrian waltz tune *Fenwick of Bywell* is based on a rather older Scottish tune.

Occasional grade 2 rapids continue to Wylam. Towards Ovington the millstone grit gives way to coal measures and there was mining along the banks from the 13th century.

There is a convenient take out at Cherryburn where it is possible to bring a vehicle over the level crossing but probably easier to carry boats across to the road. The villagers have just celebrated the 250th anniversary of artist, wood engraver and naturalist Thomas Bewick, born here in 1753. There is a museum of his work and a period farmyard, activities including printing from his original wood blocks and also Bewick whistling competitions. Charlotte Brontë was enthusiastic about his *History of British Birds* in *Jane Eyre*.

## FACT FILE

### Distance

From Bardon Mill to Cherryburn is 41km.

### Transport

There are stations at Bardon Mill, Haydon Bridge, Hexham, Corbridge, Riding Mill and Stocksfield. Haydon Bridge, Hexham, Corbridge, Riding Mill, Stocksfield and Ovington are variously served by Arriva Northumbria, Stagecoach Cumberland 685 and Wright Brothers 888 buses. Newbrough, Acomb and Hexham are variously served by Tyne Valley buses.

### Campsites

There are campsites 4km away at Twice Brewed, beside the river at Haydon Bridge, 3km away at Acomb, 300m away at Hexham and 2km away at North Acomb.

### Youth Hostels

Once Brewed youth hostel is 4km away, Acomb youth hostel is 2km away and Edmundbyres youth hostel is 12km away.

### Access

Access is allowed from Nov to Jan, from Feb to mid summer in high water and from mid summer to Aug in spate but not in Sep or Oct. The BCU river advisor for the River South Tyne and River Tyne from Haydon Bridge to Hexham is Lindsay Williams, High Loaning Head Adventure Camp, High Loaning Head, Garrigill, Alston, Cumbria CA9 3EY, tel 01434 381929.

### Normal Flow Rates

Bardon Mill - R N Tyne: 40 - 80m<sup>3</sup>/s  
R N Tyne - Cherryburn: > 80m<sup>3</sup>/s

### Water Quality

Bardon Mill - Beltingham: Fair (2)  
Beltingham - R Allen: Good (1B)  
R Allen - Cherryburn: Good (1A)

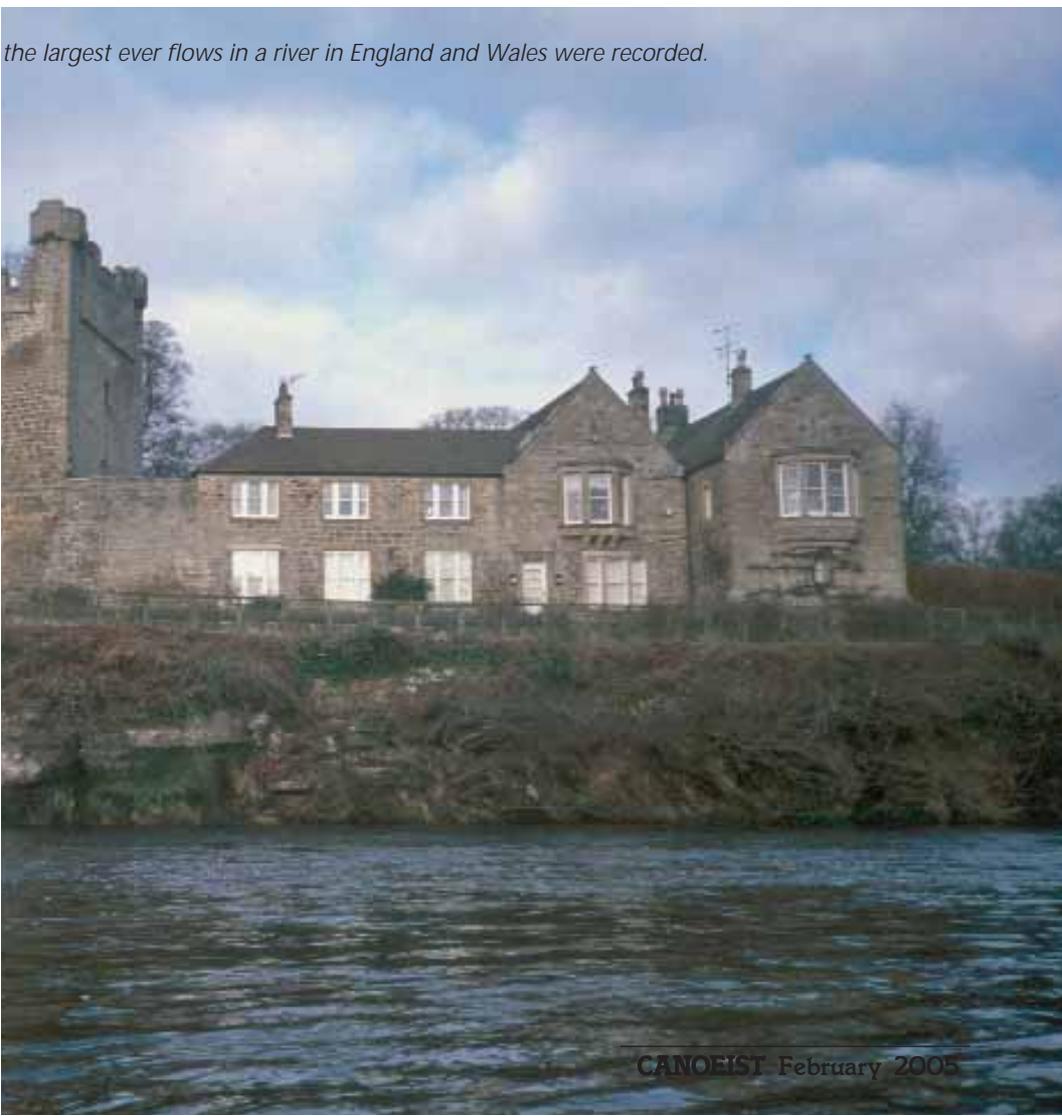
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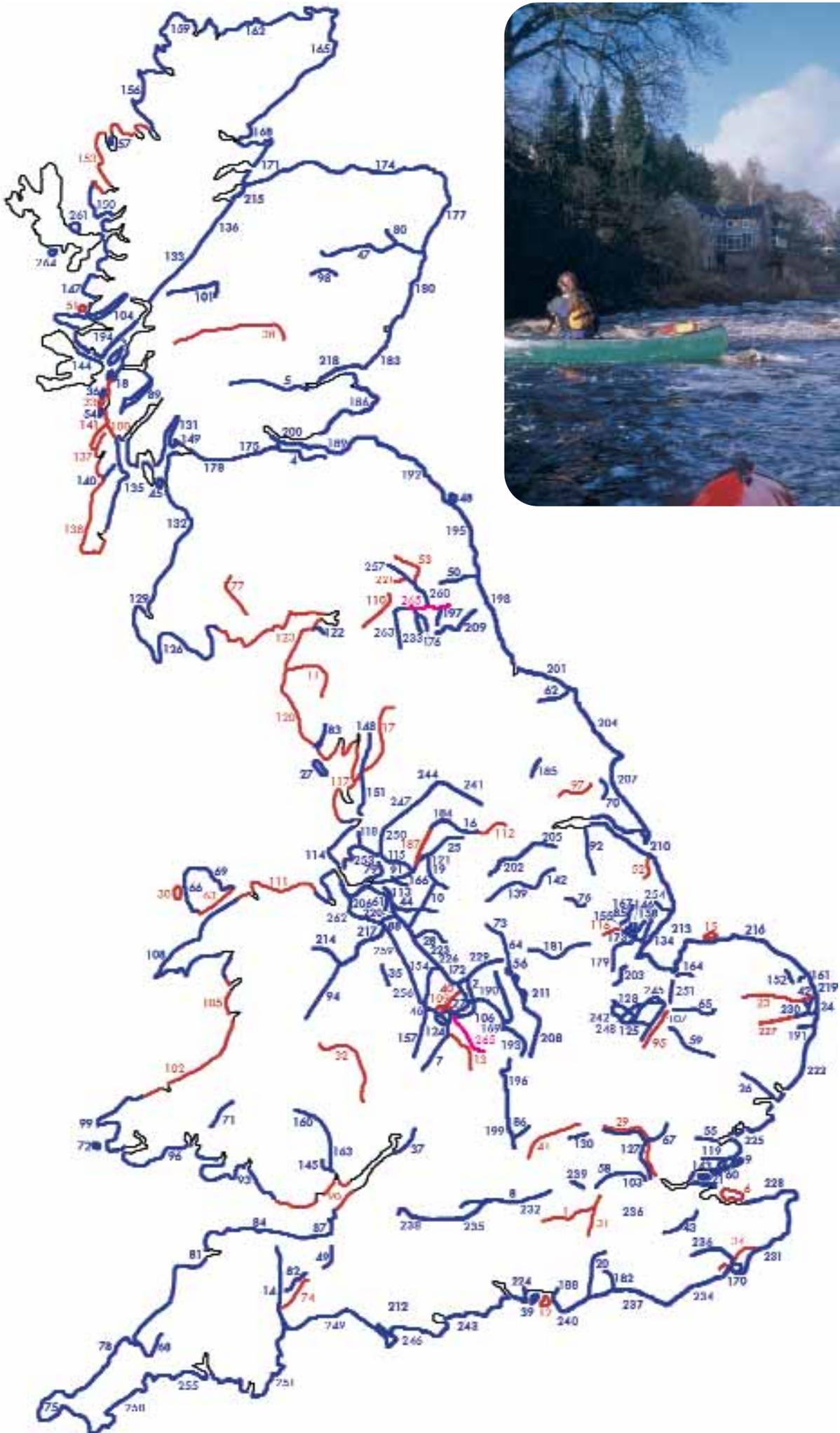
87 Hexham & Haltwhistle  
88 Newcastle upon Tyne  
Sheet 86, Haltwhistle & Brampton, also covers down to Haydon Bridge

### Forecasts

Weathercall: N E England, 09068 500 418

the largest ever flows in a river in England and Wales were recorded.





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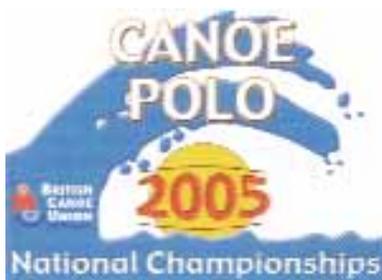
*Pete Webb clears the ball for St Albans past Adolfo Ramos of Meridian in the opening tournament match, which Meridian won 2 - 1. The two teams would also play in the last match of the championships.*

# Meridian clean sweep

## National Championships

With ExCeL being just a kilometre from the meridian it would have been sad if local club Meridian had not produced a decent performance. No worries. The three Meridian teams each won every match they played to take a crushing win.

Ever since the Crystal Palace days there has been disappointment at the loss of the national polo championships from the International Canoe Exhibition with no likelihood of its return. James Gower, marketing manager for the BMF, has been pressing *Canoeist* for a couple of years to bring the event to the Shroders London Boat Show. The problem has been that polo want to run a full tournament, not just a few games, while the show want to present a varied programme of activities in the pool, not least with a windsurfing event with \$100,000 in prize money as one of the other activities.

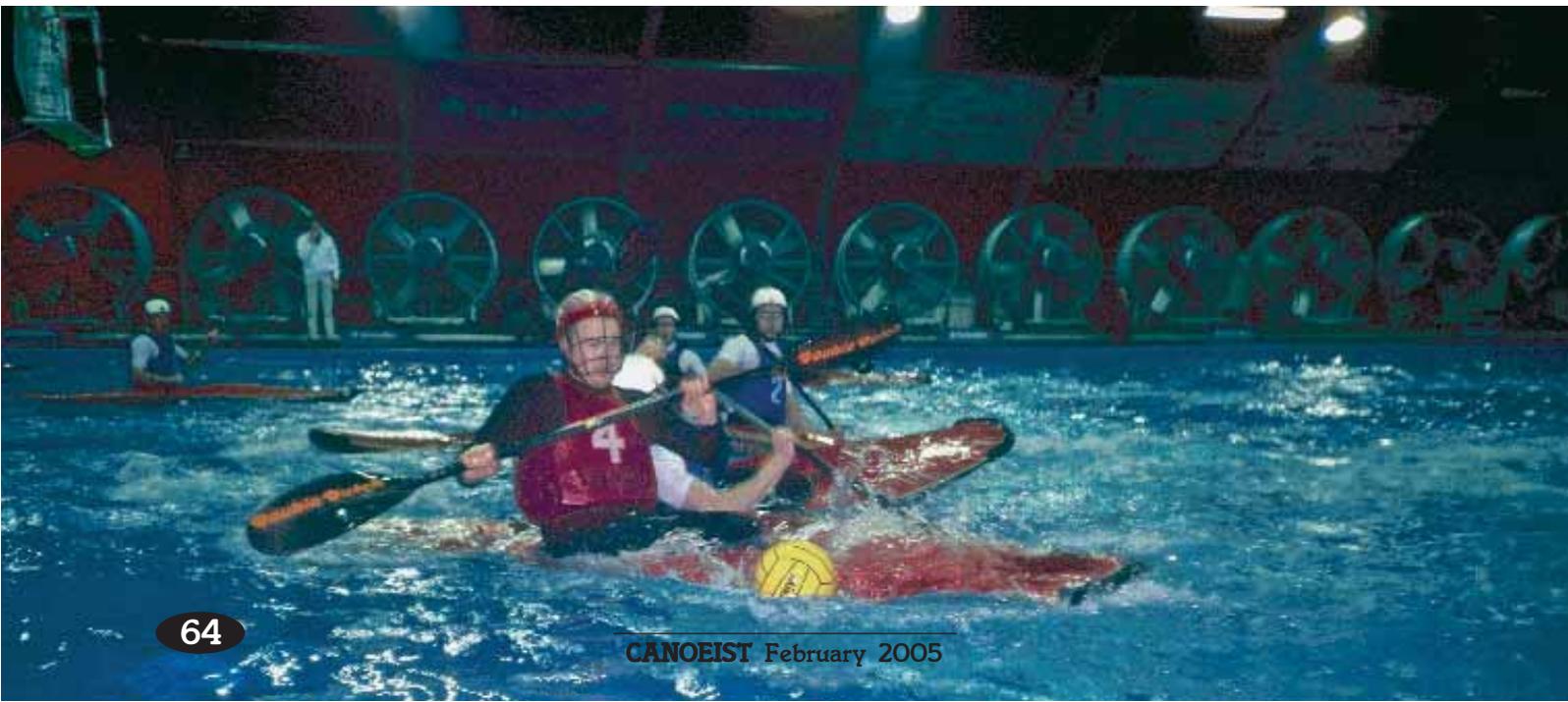


Last year there were some demonstration polo matches but this year it was a proper national championships, an event which went amazingly well, all things considered. Fairly late notice meant that the top seeded teams had to be invited rather than battling their way there. The clever piece of thinking was to present a balanced programme during the show but to allow other matches to take place out of hours with the public not admitted. The tournament ran from Friday lunchtime to Sunday afternoon of the first

weekend of the show with Saturday's matches scheduled from 8am to nearly 10pm.

Friday began with some warm up friendly matches to check the systems but everything worked well including a professional commentator over the public address system, backing music and action relayed to video screens in the main hall, which also showed the score,

*Leo Townes of Viking A fails to turn Pete Lineham of Dragon off the ball.*





**Polo**

*The scene which greeted players on the Saturday morning plus the show's prophetic notice.  
Below: Josh Connell of Viking B fails to stop Dan Adams scoring for Avon.*

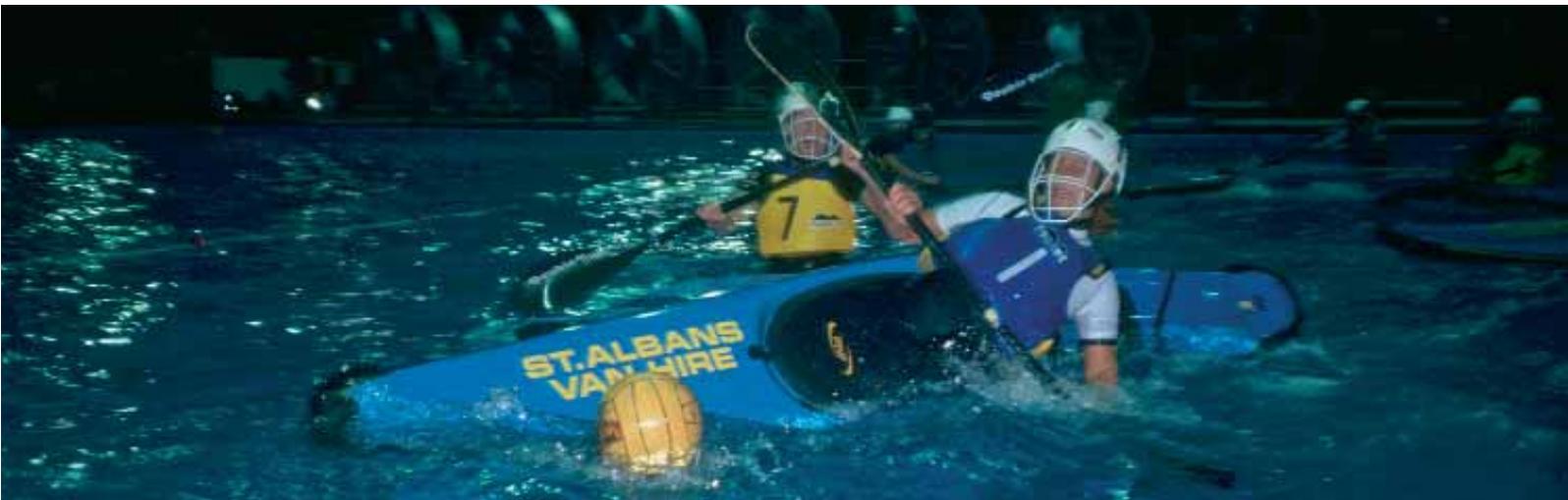




*Pippa Grayson guards for St Albans as Zoë Anthony takes an Aberfan corner.*



*Laura Randle of Friends of Allonby faced with Aberfan unhelpfulness...*



*... and being equally unhelpful to St Albans.  
Below: Kate Bridge of Friends of Allonby fights St Albans for the ball.*





*Jim Kirk of Derby prepares to clear the ball before Dragon intervene.*



*Paul Hammond receives a submarine pass in front of the Derby goal.*

time to play and team colours and names. Information provided on disk about the teams to the media was the best ever for a British canoeing competition. There had been concern as to whether it would prove sufficiently interesting to the yachtties in the show. The 3,500 seats were never all filled but the polo attracted more interest than the sailing while taking second place to the windsurfing in audience figures.

Friday's matches were all for the men. Meridian opened the tournament with a series of failed attempts against St Albans. They were into the final quarter of the match when Darren Ling opened Meridian's account, Dave Sanders levelling it immediately and Ollie Bishop producing the winner after a further 30 seconds.

Meridian had an easier time against Viking B, scoring 4 to each goal by the Midlands team in each half.

Viking's A team then played Dragon, no score in the first half but then they got into gear for a 3 goal win after the break.

The final match of the day saw Viking B back against St Albans, the only goal coming from St Albans just into the final quarter of the match.

As last year, the conditions outside were quite stormy with the temporary building shifting in the wind and a full length beam loaded with spotlights swaying alarmingly over the entrance access area. The working rule for this East Hall was that it would all be evacuated completely if the wind reached 83km/h. It hit 69km/h at Heathrow.

Competitors arrived for the 8am start on Saturday to find one panel of the building gone from the ground to the ridge. There was no action for three hours while a safety check was undertaken. Eventually it was decided that play could take place although spectators would not be admitted on safety grounds. This had the advantage that no pool time was required for other activities to be demonstrated and the polo was actually ahead of schedule by lunchtime.

The hole in the roof was not a major problem and the missing panel improved the lighting. In a discussion with *Canoeist* and show director Paul Streeter, the roofing contractor agreed that it would be possible to build in clear panels next year.

Tournament play eventually began with four youth games. Kidderminster Scout team Blakedown and Viking were unable to score in the first half and it was nearly halfway through the second half when Viking netted. Two minutes later Blakedown came back and added another 20 seconds from time. The final hooter went with Viking poised ready to shoot.

Fitted in between the youth games was a friendly between Viking B and Avon men's teams, actually one of the best games of the tournament with fast end to end play, alternating goals and a 4 all score which was indicative of the standard of play.

Blakedown were back against Friends of Allonby youth, whom they beat 4 - 1.

Meridian hammered Viking 6 - 1. Because of the telescoping of the programme they were required to play Friends of Allonby straight away. It was decided that, with a few extra minutes of rest, they were fit enough for this, the point proved when they won 5 - 3.

The Friends of Allonby seniors turned the tables by beating Viking A 3 - 0. Meridian men stamped their authority on Avon with a 5 - 2 win.

After a break of several hours to repair the roof, the first of the women's matches saw the spectators readmitted and St Albans beating Aberfan 4 - 1, including a long shot by Hilary Clarke. It could have been 5 - 1 if a St Albans shot had not bounced off the outside of the frame a second from time.

St Albans men could not find their form against Avon, Alan Vessey failing with three attempts, the last of these off the side of the goal, before setting up an excellent goal for Matt Taylor, Richard Hirst adding another in the final minute of the half. There was solid blocking by both sides but St Albans took it to 4 - 0, the last by Paul Barfoot, son of the former national coach Brian, before Avon added a final goal of their own.

Dragon began their tie with Derby by collecting a yellow card for John Morris and goals by Pete Lineham and former Olympic slalomist Chris Arrowsmith, Derby then pulling one back. In the second half Rob Lineham and Lee Knight added 2 more for Dragon, Derby's only response being a yellow card for an illegal substitution 45 seconds from time.

The evening after hours session began with a 3 - 0 win for Dragon over Friends of Allonby.

Skills were in evidence from the women as Phillipa Grayson sunk one at an oblique angle for St Albans, answered by a long shot on line by Caroline Hollies for Meridian. In the second half two shots by St Albans were successfully blocked and the scoring alternated to give Meridian a 4 - 3 win.

Friends of Allonby men took Dragon to a 3 - 0 defeat and even then they bounced more shots off the outside of the goal in the second half.

Friends of Allonby women were playing Aberfan when the exhibition switched off half the lighting, making conditions more difficult. Unfortunately, the timing was on the circuit switched off. A time of play was agreed and the tournament went over to hand timing, the only goal coming in the first half from Aberfan.

Friends of Allonby youth produced a quick goal to open against Viking and held the advantage to produce a final 5 - 2 scoreline.

On the other hand, Viking A delivered a 5 - 1 judgement against local rivals Derby, including Martin Williamson into an open goal and Tom Baston with a long shot although Andy Petrie failed to sink a final attempt, bouncing down off the bottom of the goal.

Playing Aberfan, Kirsty Sutcliffe put Meridian 2 clear but Aberfan took it in turn to switch the advantage their way. This was answered in the second half by 3 more from Meridian and a final successful attempt from Zoey Anthony for a 6 - 3 scoreline.

St Albans women's opening goal was matched by one from Friends of Allonby, the only other significant event of the half being a yellow card for unsaintly Jemma Murray, St Albans making it up to 3 - 1 by the finish.

Friends of Allonby men got straight down to business against Derby with some classic passing to set up an early goal for Stuart Moffitt. Peter



*Neil Edmunds of Friends of Allonby sends a high pass to Stuart Moffitt past Chris Arrowsmith of Dragon.*

Meakin added 2 more late in the second half but the 3 - 0 score does not do justice to the fast game in which both teams played quality polo.

The final match of the day saw a successful last ditch tackle by Kathryn Grieves of Friends of Allonby to prevent a Meridian dribble going into an open goal. Subsequent attempts by Samantha Barry, Sarah Ellsworth and Andi Fear-Ross were not foiled, however, and only a final goal by Ellie Bridgstock got Friends of Allonby into the scoring.

Sunday began with the building still standing and the pool still full. Meridian youth took Blakedown to a 6 - 1 defeat and Friends of Allonby took 3rd place from Viking with a 3 - 1 win in the playoffs. In the corresponding women's playoff Aberfan beat Friends of Allonby 3 - 2. For 7th place, Viking B beat Derby 2 - 1.

The first men's semi final had Sanders opening the scoring for St Albans against Friends of Allonby with a goal from halfway down the pool. Even this shot was surpassed by Vessey with a desperate shot two thirds the length of the pool, still in the air as the half time hooter went. In the second half he set up a more conventional goal for Pete Webb and produced some quality blocking for a 2 - 0 score.

The playoff for 5th place was between Dragon and Avon, the latter short of a member and using Mark Preddy, normally a mainstay of Meridian but not otherwise playing in this tournament, this being his

only match. Avon opened the scoring, levelled by Dragon before the interval. Richard Churchill put Avon ahead again before Dragon swung it the other way with 2 more goals, the latter as a result of slick passing. Preddy levelled it with a long shot but the winner from Pete Lineham resulted from a penalty.

In the other men's semi final Viking A's Morris kept out a sustained attack by Meridian although Leo Townes was shown a green card and both teams saw it again before the break. Williamson opened the scoring for Viking in the second half, answered by Bishop of Meridian. After frantic play all round the goal Townes added another and Andy Petrie added a third. With under 3 minutes to play and 2 goals down, most teams would have cracked but Neil Parker came back with the necessary 2 for Meridian, the latter into the final minute. Townes missed another shot but Viking netted another as the final hooter went. The judges conferred and the goal was not allowed. This took the match into golden goal time. The golden boy was Adolfo Ramos, also the Spanish captain, to put Meridian through from a deservedly disappointed Viking team.

The first of the finals was the youth event. Meridian, playing their first tournament, were to keep the pressure on Blakedown for the majority of the time, a team including two girls. Meridian scored first and Chris Haynes added another before Sophie Yarwood pulled one

*Andy Monk of Derby puts a pass over the head of Viking A's Tom Baston.*





*Action from the tie between Derby and Friends of Allonby. Top: Peter Meakin of Friends of Allonby pauses before passing. Centre: Chris Bussell drives into Ian Vaughan while Peter Meakin also receives unwanted attention. Bottom: Andy Monk tries to turn the ball away from Stuart Moffitt.*

back for Blakedown. In the second half Meridian added 2 more from Alex Grant and 13 year old Jack Robson, the youngest player in the tournament, and he added a subsequent one from a long shot. After a drop ball, which Blakedown won but lost while rolling, Meridian had a final attempt which was blocked but it still left them as 5 - 1 champions.

St Albans began the women's final by controlling Meridian's game but their shots were being blocked by the London team. Eventually, St Albans dropped the ball but a resulting Meridian shot fell short. A long ball by Sutcliffe found its mark and she did it again after St Albans had foiled a break. Long shots by St Albans were to go wide. After the interval an attempt by Hilary Clarke was blocked by Sutcliffe but St Albans were equally effective against a Meridian attack. Then Samantha Berry made best use of a Fear-Ross pass, to be answered with a goal from Lianne Grayson for St Albans. Fear-Ross bounced another off the outside of the goal but Sutcliffe had more joy. Finally, Francesca Ciancio brought the score to 4 - 2 off a Meridian paddle but time had run out and Meridian had their second title.

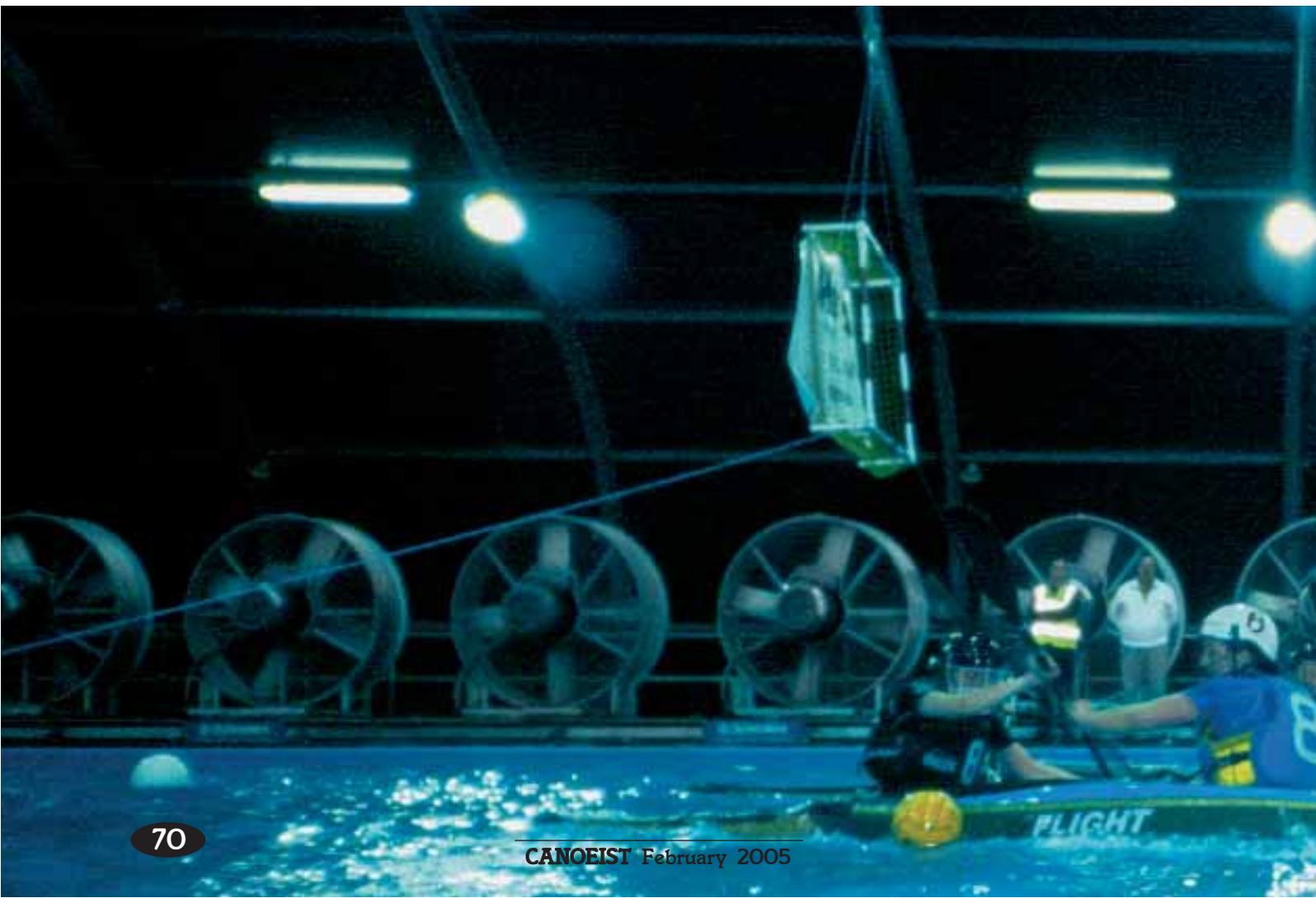
The same two clubs played in the men's final, St Albans circling and controlling play until Ramos made a break and put Meridian ahead, Parker adding another from the wing a minute later. The captains were

called in and told to calm play but it was not exceptional in a tournament which showed generally good humoured play throughout. Webb tried a long shot which went wide and Parker had a shot from the wing blocked but Ling made a break to an open goal to put Meridian 3 ahead. A Sanders goal was not allowed but one from Vessey did open St Albans' account 20 seconds before half time. 15 seconds into the second half Ramos scored from under the St Albans goal but an attempt by Webb to do the same at the opposite end was foiled by a timely tackle. Meridian put a wild one over the top and then St Albans had a series of shots blocked in quick succession. A final break by Meridian gave them a last goal to make it 5 - 1 with 5 seconds to play. It was a game in which St Albans had had most of the control but Meridian had made more effective use of the breaks. It also gave Meridian a phenomenal triple win in a tournament which had gone well despite the problems.

The icing on the cake came the following morning when the *Independent* carried a double page picture from the tournament. The BMF had this priced up in terms of its publicity value to the show, £28,500. Why should the BMF have been so keen to have had polo in the pool in the first place? Could it have had anything to do with the fact that, as a junior, James Gower used to play with Luton?



Above: Greg Hockey of Meridian keeps the ball from Blakedown in the youth final. Below: Samantha R...





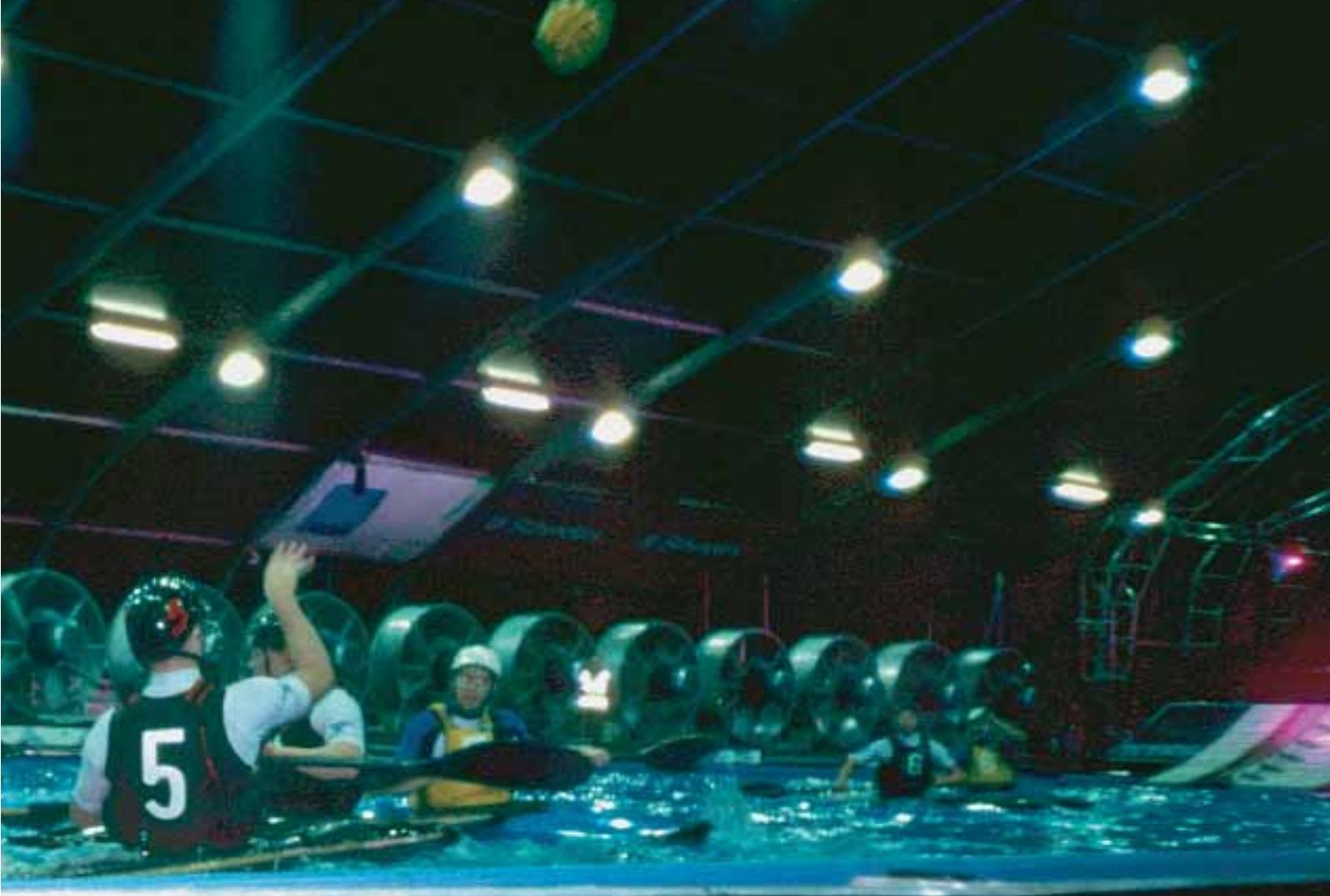
*Defenders of Meridian attempts to stop Lianne Grayson collecting the ball for St Albans in the women's final.*





*The men's final. Above: Danny Bowles of Meridian sends a high ball to Ollie Bish*





op. Below: Adolfo Ramos being hassled by St Albans as Bowles looks for the pass.



# British women are top 5th World Championships

Well, it was always going to be an event to remember and it was certainly worth the wait as the SARS postponed 5th World Dragon Boat Racing Championship finally came to town in Qingpu, Shanghai, on 20th October 2004 (one year after the 6th championships awarded by the IDBF took place in Poznan due to the postponed 5th; work that one out).

With an opening ceremony that was delightfully different from previous ones and a firework display that took our breath away, the good folk of Qingpu turned out in their many thousands to give the championship an exhilarating start with full length TV coverage of the proceedings repeated every night during the championship week. Friendly hosting and efficient organization were the hallmarks of the off water activity and, after the initial concerns of some teams that they would not get enough of the right food, which was not the case, a great time was had by all and many new friendships made.

On the water the facilities could not be faulted and a combination of IDBF race officials working closely with a team of local and national race officials made for a well run and efficient competition organization that ran smoothly and effectively throughout the four days of competition and without one formal or informal complaint from the teams.

The championship racing, too, was of the very highest order and the first time since 1997 that full strength teams from East and West had met head to head at a world championship. Nearly 1,800 competitors in 63 crews, representing 18 nations, battled for the medals and world champion status. The result was a dominance of the West in the Premier division with 18 of the 24 medals going West. In the Premier open, Canada, Russia and the USA shared the major spoils with the Philippines winning one silver medal and the Czech Republic taking 3 bronze medals.

In the mixed races Russia and China took gold. In the Premier women's division the Great Britain team proved themselves to be the best in the world with 1 gold and 2 silver medals to their credit. China and Canada took a gold apiece whilst in the senior division the Chinese crews swept the board with 7 in the gold medals department, Canada and Russia collecting all but one of the silver medals. (USA took that one.) In the junior division it was a pretty even contest with China and Russia taking 2 gold medals each and Germany one and these three also sharing the other medals, except for Canada sneaking a bronze. It was good, too, to see the Australian juniors on the water for the first time.

Equally welcome on the water were our Pink Ladies in the breast cancer survivors crews who, as always, enjoyed their racing and Shanghai to the full and brought tears to the eyes of many a hardened dragon boater with their very moving pink petals ceremony held on the water after their last race in memory of those who had lost their own race for life.

In the battle for the Nations Cup Canada defied the odds and came out as top Premier nation for the third time in a row whilst the newly presented Koo-Kwok Senior Nations Cup was lifted on high by China.

## Dragon Boat International

**200m: WP:** 1 Canada, 50.94. 2 GB, 51.40. 3 Zhongguo, 51.80. **OP:** 1 Canada, 43.12. 2 Pilipinas, 44.03. 3 Ceska, 44.56. 5 GB, 46.62. **OS:** 1 Canada, 44.66. 2 Rossija, 47.12. 3 USA, 47.65. 5 GB, 48.85. **500m: WP:** 1 GB, 2:03.96. 2 Zhongguo, 2:04.27. 3 Deutschland, 2:04.52. **1km: WP:** 1 Zhongguo, 4:10.93. 2 GB, 4:11.97. 3 Canada, 4:12.31. **WS:** 1 Canada, 4:24.20. 2 Deutschland, 4:25.63. 3 USA, 4:40.76. 5 GB, 4:52.41. **OS:** 1 Zhongguo, 3:50.00. 2 USA, 3:51.62. 3 Canada, 3:54.80. 6 GB, 4:00.33. **Nations Cup:** 1 Canada, 95. 2 Rossija, 73. 3 Zhongguo, 73. 5 GB, 58.

## Championships for all

The world nations championships will be in Berlin over 3rd - 7th August with the European club championships. First, however, over the last 3 days of July will be the first world corporate and community championships, a series of festival races open to nearly any team able to think up a reasonable name. There really is a category for just about any crew somewhere during the course of this event.

The 2006 European nations and corporate and community championships will be run by the Czech Republic near Prague. The 2007 European club crew championships will be on the Black Sea at Rostov.



Above: St Albans ladies congratulate Meridian at the prizegiving.  
Below: The three Meridian teams, every one a winner.



2005 Capital Photo

**W:** St Albans 4, Aberfan 1. Meridian 4, St Albans 3. Friends of Allonby 0, Aberfan 1. Meridian 5, Aberfan 3. St Albans 3, Friends of Allonby 1. Meridian 4, Friends of Allonby 1. 3/4: Aberfan 3, Friends of Allonby 2. F: Meridian 4, St Albans 2. Y: Blakedown 2, Viking 1. Blakedown 4, Friends of Allonby 1. Meridian 6, Viking 1. Friends of Allonby 3, Meridian 5. Viking 2, Friends of Allonby 5. Meridian 6, Blakedown 1. 3/4: Friends of Allonby 3, Viking 1. F: Meridian 5, Blakedown 1. M: Meridian 2, St Albans 1. Meridian 8, Viking B 2. Viking A 3, Dragon 0. St Albans 1, Viking B 0. Friends of Allonby 3, Viking A 0. Meridian 6, Avon 2. Avon 1, St Albans 4. Derby 1, Dragon 4. Dragon 0, Friends of Allonby 3. Viking A 4, Derby 1. Derby 0, Friends of Allonby 3. 7/8: Derby 1, Viking B 2. 5/6: Dragon 4, Avon 3. SF: Friends of Allonby 0, St Albans 2. Meridian 4, Viking A 3. F: Meridian 5, St Albans 1.

# Two women's squads selected to defend British title

## GB Women's Squad Selection

The selection process for the GB women's squad for the 2005 season was completed on Sunday 23rd January. The selection had taken place over the course of two weekends, one in December, which took place at the site used by Blakedown Canoe Polo Club, and one in January, which took place at the Burrs Outdoor Centre in Bury.

Over the course of the weekend 20 participants were put through their paces to assess boat handling skills, ball handling skills, game awareness, speed and accuracy. Many opportunities were given for the players to perform discrete skills and to perform in the context of drills and full games.

At the end of the second weekend the difficult process of selection was completed. The standard was high and coaches Dave Brown and I had a difficult task. The season ahead has some interesting challenges: it's the first time canoe polo has been represented in the World Games, which take place in Germany in July; the Europeans take place in September in Madrid, giving a long season. The women are the current world champions but will have to work hard to maintain their position in these two major international competitions.

It was decided to select two squads, a senior squad and a development squad. The development squad includes some promising players for the future of canoe polo in Great Britain, some of whom are also being considered for the women's U21 squad which will also be competing in the European championships in Madrid this September.

The senior squad includes: Ginny Coyles, Philippa Grayson, Lianne Grayson, Kirsty Sutcliffe, Andi Fear-Ross, Sharon Derrick, Zoë Anthony, Kathryn Grieves, Caroline Hollies, Kate Bridge, Ellie Bridgstock, Hilary Clarke and Jo Marshall.

The development squad includes Sarah Kerwin, Jemma Murray, Claire Griffiths, Laura Hoskins, Laura Randle and Fran Bateman.

The season is now truly underway and the women have started training hard so they can secure their position as world champions and set out to win more gold medals.

Nicki Ward

## Canadian courses to be upgraded

The Canadian Federal Government, Ontario Provincial Government and City of Toronto have pledged \$23,000,000 to build a course for the 2006 club crew worlds in Toronto. There have also been promises of funding to upgrade the Welland course for the 2007 world corporate and community championships.

*Solicitors J Garrard & Allen of Olney have sponsored Jamie Burbeck for the world freestyle championships in Australia. There is little team cash and British competitors have been expected to pay their own fares.*

## Outriggers cooperate with dragon boats

The International Va'a Federation and the IDBF are planning a joint meeting to discuss items of mutual interest between outrigger and dragon boat racing. Topics will include remaining independent of the ICF. The GAISF council have again confirmed support for the IDBF as the sole governing body for dragon boat racing but the efforts of the ICF to intervene continue. Indeed, the ICF calendar has dates further ahead for their own dragon boat races than for any other activity in which they claim an interest. It is said that the ICF have written to the GAISF council, rejecting their authority on who should run dragon boat racing. At home the BCU confirmed a while back that the BDF were the governing body for dragon boat racing in Britain.

## Fischer given Eurosport award

German sprinter Birgit Fischer has been given the SportStar Award 2004 by Eurovision. She has competed in every Olympic Games from 1980 to 2004, winning 8 Olympic golds and 4 silvers, not to mention 29 gold medals at world championships.



David Train

## Surfing

### Ranking list winners

L: 1 A Whyte, 2,000. 2 J Fletcher, 1,000. O: 1 J Howe, 2,722. 2 M Trise, 2,425. 3 K Davies, 2,000. S: 1 J Howe, 2,900. 2 M Trise, 2,166. 3 T Dymond, 1,800. MV: 1 K Davies, 2,000. 2 J Trelease, 1,750. 3 S Chivers, 1,250. V: 1 J Trelease, 2,750. 2 I Kimber, 1,167.

## Multisport

### Worcester Duathlon

**Long 1:** 1 M Swallow, Chester, 57:40. 2 S Marnell, Runcorn, 1:00:13. 3 D Blyth, Wokingham. **Long 2:** 1 M Bowerbank, Bath, 59:35. 2 C Fleeson, Anker Valley, 1:01:41. 3 G Illidge, Runcorn, 1:02:15. **Short:** 1 M Hampton, Leicester Outdoor Pursuits, 37:57. 2 S Goodchild, Hereford, 38:36. 3 G Hunt, Fladbury, 39:52. **Lg/Fun:** 1 J Tye, Worcester, 17:24. 2 M Bowley, Burton, 19:15. 3 A Baker, Bath, 20:16. **LT:** 1 Hereford, 25. 2 Chester, 21. 3 Bath, 12. **JT:** 1 Bath, 60. 2 Leicester Outdoor Pursuits, 52. 3 Worcester, 31. **CT:** 1 Fladbury, 25. 2 Banbury, 1. **O/AT:** 1 Chester, 71. Worcester, 71. 3 Bath, 60.



Olle Castle

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## Associations

**Association of Canoe Trades**, 85 Edgedale Rd, Sheffield, S Yorks S7 2BR.

**British Canoe Union**, John Dudderidge House, Adbolton Lane, W Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 5AS.

**British Dragon Boat Racing Association**, 13 The Prebend, Northend, Leamington Spa, Warks.

**British Quadrathlon Association**, 2 Highview Gardens, Jersey Farm, St Albans, Herts AL4 9JX.

**British Wave Ski Association**, 5 Cudmore Park, Tiverton, Devon EX16 4QJ.

**Canoe Association of Northern Ireland**, House of Sport, 2A Upper Malone Rd, Belfast BT9 5LA.

**Canoe-Camping Club**, 25 Waverley Rd, S Norwood SE25 4HT.

**Historic Canoe & Kayak Association**, 48 Russell Way, Higham Ferrers NN10 8EJ.

**International Sea Kayak Association**, 4 Sinodun Row, Appleford-on-Thames, Oxon OX14 4PE.

**Open Canoe Association**, 1st Floor Flat, 12 Orwell Rd, Dovercourt CO12 3LD.

**Open Canoe Sailing Group**, 110 Heacham Drive, Leicester LE4 0LG.

**Scottish Canoe Association**, Caledonia House, S Gyle, Edinburgh EH12 9DQ.

**Welsh Canoeing Association**, Frongoch, Bala, Gwynedd LL23 7NU.

**Young Explorers' Trust**, Royal Geographical Society, 1 Kensington Gore, London SW7 2AR.

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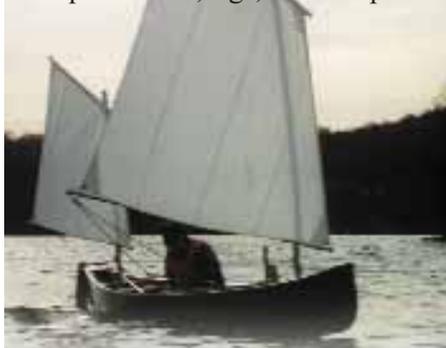
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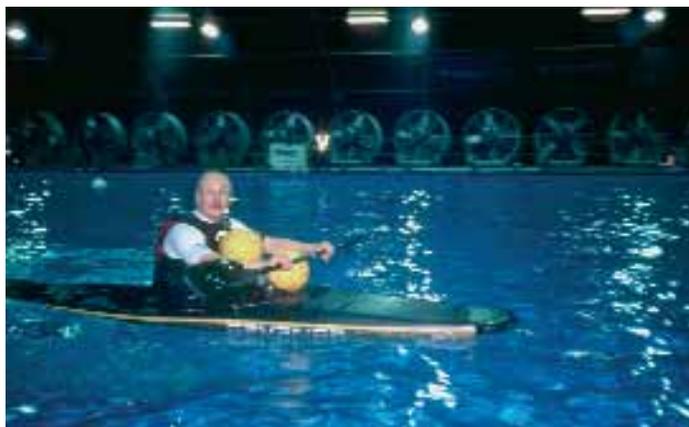
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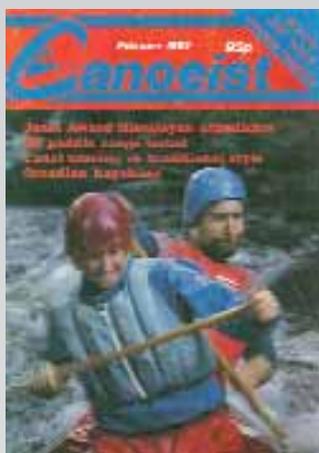
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The most humorous caption to this photograph received in writing before February 28th will win its sender a Gene 17 video or DVD of choice. Please write your caption or captions and send to Canoeist Caption Competition 219, 4 Sinodun Row, Appleford-on-Thames, Oxon OX14 4PE or email [cc219@canoeist.co.uk](mailto:cc219@canoeist.co.uk), including your own name and address. The winning entry will be published in the April issue.



Caption Competition 217 winner: Dane Butler, Sleaford, Lincs who also exclaimed 'Whoa! Do you see the size of that!' Whit Deschner's picture shows Bernard (who is not loopey) and Lupio (who is not a St Bernard).



## Back then 20 years ago

- \* It was one of our worst years for fatalities; high water was usually a factor although no accidents involved folding.
- \* The Corps of Canoe Lifeguards were to have a name change and be taught white water skills to make them acceptable to other canoeists at events.
- \* Apartheid restrictions were causing problems for British WWR and surfing teams.
- \* Slalarathon was launched in Bedford, a short marathon and 10 slalom gates all in the same boat.
- \* The 6th Basingstoke Boys' Brigade appeared in the BBC's *Songs of Praise*, paddling along the Basingstoke Canal.
- \* John Brand published his first *Little Kayak Book*.
- \* A fast food retailer in Llangollen said the British Open slalom weekend brought him his best business of the year.
- \* The 3rd Walsall Sea Scouts announced the Birmingham Century Race but the first People's Canoe Marathon on the Thames lacked people.
- \* A 500m race between a K4 and a rowing four in Exeter resulted in a 3 length win for the paddlers.
- \* The British WWR world championships selection race was to be held in Germany.

## 10 years ago

- \* At 76 pages, this was our biggest issue ever on paper. Regular contributor Andy Halliday emigrated to Australia.
- \* We were concerned about calls for regulations for outdoor centres following the Lyme Bay case, in which the company owner was jailed but the centre manager walked free.
- \* A bus trapped in floods with passengers under a Welsh bridge was able to be towed free after a canoeist attached a rope.
- \* Salisbury Canoe Club were the Foundation for Sport & the Arts' Sports Club of the Year.
- \* The National Rivers Authority became the Environment Agency but no improvement in access was anticipated although they had been talking of Thames weir benefits. *Canoeist* negotiated with the National Trust to resolve access problems at some of their sites.
- \* CEN decreed that wetsuits should become constant wear suits.
- \* We showed photographs of the Teesside white water course being constructed.
- \* The ICF were to separate wild water racing from slalom.
- \* Llandysul Canoe Club received a £120,000 grant to develop their site and buy property. The Teifi WWR finisher was ejected by the landowner before the C2s arrived, for not having permission to be there.
- \* The Hasler finals were to be held in Scotland for the first time, on Loch Ken. The first dragon boat world championships were to be held in China.



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