

June 2005

Canoeist

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



**The WWR World Cup series
Morocco's Hidden River
Channel records fall
Back to St Kilda**

After 52 years

The final issue

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Philip Oakley

9 Explorer Scouts from Ripon completed a trek in Morocco before going on to run the Hidden River in the Middle Atlas Mountains as part of their Duke of Edinburgh's Award training.

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Ian Tordoff

The 30 year old record for crossing the English Channel in a single kayak has been well and truly broken.

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Jim Hargreaves

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Andy Spink

To have paddled around St Kilda, Hirta and all the stacks in 2004 was just amazing and I am still high as a kite over the whole experience. To organize another expedition this year was risky and being a hostage to fortune was even riskier.



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This will be the final issue. We have seen good and bad in our 52 years, some notable achievements and a gruelling war of attrition.

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A play detailing some Tyneside shipbuilding which we missed in last month's guide.



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Calendar

TOURING

June

- 1 W Midlands, Anglesey [01407 762525]
- 4 Spring, OC, S Midlands [07818 091152]
- 1 Teign Estuary [01392 433811]
- 1 Washburn [0113 273 7393]
- 3 - 5 EDF 24 hr W France, Lochrist [00 33 297 651 111]
- 5 R Wye, 2 [01432 275528]
- 9 - 12 Augustow-Biebrza [00 48 501 274 244]
- 11 Conwy Ascent [01492 650989]
- 11/12 Rosehearty & Macduff, K, B [0131 667 6872]
- 11/12 Washburn [01274 870988]
- 12 Torridge Estuary [01392 433811]
- 12 Tourability, Arley [0121 772 3739]
- 18/19 Doubles, K, A/B, W Scotland [0131 667 6872]
- 18/19 L Lomond, K, A [0131 667 6872]
- 18/19 Solstice, E Devon [01297 32380]
- 22 Washburn [0113 273 7393]
- 25/26 Caithness, K, B/C [0131 667 6872]
- 25/26 Garvellachs, K, B [0131 667 6872]
- 26 Washburn [justinscott_uk@yahoo.co.uk]
- 30 - 3 Axmouth Coast & Estuary, OC [07818 091152]

July

- 1 - 3 Papa Stour, K, B [0131 667 6872]
- 1 - 3 Pershore Camp [01386 554130]
- 2 - 8 Sound of Sleat/S Skye, K, C [0131 667 6872]
- 8 - 10 Sea Symposium, Woodmill [023 8055 5993]**
- 8 - 11 Sound of Arisaig & Small Isles, K, B/C [0131 667 6872]
- 10 Sutton's Severn [0121 360 2136]
- 16/17 Falmouth [01392 273173]
- 16/17 Thames Traditional Boat Rally, Henley
- 17 Fowey Estuary [01392 433811]
- 20 Teign Estuary [01392 433811]
- 27 Washburn [01423 862411]
- 30/31 Gairloch - Poolewe, K, B [0131 667 6872]

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

SURFING

June

- 1 W Midlands, K, Anglesey
- 4/5 Freshwater W, K
- 17 - 19 Goldcoast Ocean Festival, W,

Croyde

W - wave skis (British Wave Ski Association. K - kayak (BCU). I - international. HP - high performance. O - open. BCU Yearbook £2.00 + A5 SAE from 19 Widworthy Drive, Broadstone, Dorset BH18 9BD.

MARATHON

June

- 3 - 5 Vltavotynsky
- 9 - 12 2nd W & Central Asian Championships, Sepeedrood R
- 11 Conwy Ascent
- 11/12 Windsor, V
- 12 Bristol, K2H
- 12 Macclesfield 2, K2H
- 12 Royal, K2H, London & SE
- 18 Pembroke R
- 19 Exe Circuit, K1H
- 19 York, K1H
- 19 Burton, K2H
- 19 Chester 1, K2H
- 19 Leighton Buzzard, K2H
- 19 Round Island, Amble
- 24 - 26 Orofero Challenge, Toulon
- 25 Royal Padding Challenge, London & SE
- 25/26 Crestuma, WC 1, Assessment
- 25/26 Cheshire Ring
- 26 Hereford, K1H
- 29 - 3 Yukon River Quest

July

- 3 Open Dutch K1 Championships, Wormer
- 3 Tamar Circuit, K2H
- 10 Wey, K1H
- 10 Macclesfield 3, K2H
- 10 KCC Tay
- 13 - 16 Isuzu Berg
- 16 Stockton Mini
- 17 Runcorn, K1H
- 17 Camel's Hump
- 17 Reading K4 1
- 23/24 European Championships, S/J, Assessment, Tyn nad Vltavou
- 24 Soar Valley, K2H
- 24 Inverness
- 30 La Porquerollaise
- 31 Thames Valley, K1H

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.

SLALOM

June

- 4 Holme Pierrepont, S, Selection
- 4/5 Pays des Ecrins, S.J, L'Argentière la Bessée
- 4/5 Tacen, C, S/J
- 4/5 Langham Farm, 3/4

- 4/5 Scottish Schools Championships, 3/4/O, Alva
- 4/5 Holme Pierrepont, S/U23, Selection
- 10 - 12 Mayor Krakow Cup, C, S/J
- 11/12 Holme Pierrepont, PC/P1/Selection**
- 11/12 Sowerby Bridge, 3/4
- 11/12 Nene
- 12 Alpe Adria, C, S/J, Tacen
- 17 Monschau
- 18/19 Ziemia Sadecka Cup, J, Wietrznic
- 18/19 Holme Pierrepont, 1/2
- 18/19 Fairnilee, 2 - 4
- 18/19 Stone, 3/4

24 - 26 European Championships, S, Tacen

- 25/26 Cardington, 2 - 4
- 25/26 Hatfield Water Park

July

- 1/2 4th Asian Championships, Kangwon Province
- 2/3 Ironbridge, 2/3
- 8 - 10 Athinai, WC 1, S**
- 9/10 Pre World Championship, C, J, Solkan
- 9/10 Washburn, 2/O
- 9/10 Shepperton, 3/4
- 15 - 17 Augsburg, WC 2, S**
- 16 Stockton Diamond
- 16/17 Orton Mere, 3/4
- 22 - 24 La Seu d'Urgell, WC 3, S**
- 23/24 Washburn, 1
- 29 - 31 Trojan Horse Prize, C, Praha

A - restricted entry international. B - invitation international. C - unrestricted entry international. P - Premier division. 1 - 4 divisions. Cl - club event. Yearbook £4.00 from Jim Croft, 12 Holmscroft Rd, Luton, Beds LU3 2TJ.

WILD WATER RACING

June

- 4/5 Eiskanal, Sp, C, Augsburg
- ~~11/12 R Adda, Cl/Sp~~ postponed
- 18 Stone, Sp, B/O/Wh/U
- 18/19 Mattoni Karlovy, Cl/Sp
- 18/19 Welsh Open, 3/4, Cl/Sp, A/B/O/Wh/U/Selection, Tryweryn
- 25/26 R Simme, Cl/Sp
- 25/26 R Una, Cl/Sp

July

- 9/10 Nene 2, Sp, B/O/Wh/U/Fun
- 20 - 24 European Championships, Cl/Sp, S/J, R Chaux**
- 28 - 31 World Championships, J, Mezzana**

W - world ranking. A - restricted entry international. B - invitation international. C - unrestricted entry international. Cl - 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.

Get away!



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FREESTYLE

June

11/12 **Bremgarten, EC**
12 Canolfan Tryweryn, J

July

1 - 3 **Nottingham, EC**
10 Canolfan Tryweryn, J

23/24 Tryweryn Peak Challenge
R - ranking. Yearbook from Bev Chrimes, 14 Kingswood Rd, W Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 7HS.

SPRINT

June

4/5 Bosbaan
4/5 Orsova
4/5 National, Assessment, Holme Pierrepont
9 - 12 2nd W & Central Asian Championships, Tehran
11/12 Bydgoszcz
11/12 Snagov
15 Lowport Summer Series 10km
17 - 1953rd Ruhr, J, Assessment, Bochum
19 Broadwood
22 Nottingham, K4 10km
25/26 36th Decize
25/26 Mediterranean Games, Almería
25/26 Auronzo di Cadore
25/26 Zaan
25/26 *Cardiff Bay Festival*
26 Kirkcaldy
26 Reading, J
26/27 Duisburg, S

July

1 - 9 Special Olympics, Glasgow
2/3 Caccamo
2/3 **National Championships, Assessment, Nottingham**
7 - 9 European Y Olympic Festival, San Giorgio di Nogano
7 - 10 Pan American Championships, Québec
13 Lowport Summer Series 10km
13 Nottingham, K4 10km
14 - 17 **European Championships, U23/J, Plovdiv**
14 - 24 **World Games, Duisburg**
16 Stockton
16 Royal, J, London & SE
23/24 African Championships, St Louis
28 - 31 **European Championships, S, Poznan**

Yearbook £4.50 from Diane Bates, 11 Cranley Rd, Burwood Park, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey KT12 5BX.

MULTISPORT

June

4/5 N England Ace
10 - 12 Forest of Dean
11/12 Bristol Rat
18 Ace
July
3 Bradford 4 x 4
3 Minley Mayhem
4 - 8 One.Tel Hebridean Challenge
9 Sherwood Forest Quest
15 - 17 Forest of Dean
16/17 Edinburgh Rat
30/31 NW England Open Adventure

POLO

June

11/12 **14th Merseyside, I**
25/26 Hazewinkel
25/26 *Cardiff Bay Festival* 25/26 Hatfield Water Park

July

2/3 **Hull Challenge, I**
9/10 16th San Giorgio di Nogaro
17/18 **World Games, Duisburg**
N - national teams. C - club teams. 1 - 5 - divisions. ID - indoors. OD - outdoors. Yearbook £3.00 + 50p P&P from Beverley Dancer.

SAILING

June

- 3 Coppett Week, S, IC, Saundersfoot
4/5 Coastal, OC, Rhoscolyn
11 - 14 **Nationals & ACM, P, IC, Dale**
18/19 Göteborg, IC
18/19 Hickling Broad, OC
25/26 Hayling Island, IC
25/26 Heritage, IC, Norfolk
25/26 or 9/10.7 Rhoscolyn, OC

July

2/3 Lord Birkett Trophy, S, IC, Ullswater
16/17 Lakes Classic, OC, Ullswater
22 - 24 Scottish Expedition, OC, Balquidder
23 - 30 German National Championship, IC, Lindow
P - Premier. 2 - Secondary. IC - International Canoe. OC - open canoe.

DRAGON BOAT RACING

June

11 Stanley
10 - 12 26th Penang Festival, Teluk Bahang Dam
11/12 Meilen

12 Surrey Docks, N
18 - 20 Hong Kong
24 - 26 Hanseatics, Hamburg
24 - 26 Vancouver
25/26 Toronto
26 Nottingham, N

July

1 - 3 Suffolk Scouts & Guides Wet Weekend, Ramsholt
2/3 Swiss Open, Luzern
10 Exeter, N
12 Youth Afloat Challenge, London
17/18 **World Games, Duisburg**
19 - 22 ICF World Club Crew Championships, Schwerin
23 Royal Albert Dock, N, London
24 Nene
29 - 7 **7th World Dragons, Berlin**
30/31 Long Beach Festival
30/31 Corporate & Community Championships

C - Charity Challenge. N - national league. O - Open. S - Standard. Handbook from British Dragon Boat Association, 13 The Prebend, Northend, Leamington Spa, Warwicks CV47 2TR.

BELL BOAT RACING

June

25/26 Hatfield Water Park

July

16 **National Championships, Stockton**

OUTRIGGER

June

24 - 26 Orofero Challenge, Toulon

July

30 Porquerolaise, Toulon

MISCELLANEOUS

June

10 - 12 Beale Park Thames Boat Show
12 World Canoeing Day
17 - 19 Urban Escapes, Waltham Abbey
25/26 *Cardiff Bay Festival [029 2087 7954]*

25/26 Come & Try It, Hatfield

July

9/10 3 Mills Boat Rally
16 Youthfest, Stockton
16/17 Thames Traditional Boat Rally
30/31 SW Outdoor Show, Cheddar
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.

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Editorial

With the Government up and running again after the general election the International Sea Kayak Association has again taken up the issue of certification of miniflare guns with the Secretary of State for the Home Office, Charles Clarke. This has been addressed on the ground by the Firearms Section of the Home Office, slogan 'Building a Safe, Just and Tolerant Society.'

Building an unsafe society

The problem has been that the Nicosignal, by far the safest of the miniflare launchers, has become subject to all the bureaucracy and restrictions of firearms. What seems not to be appreciated, even by my police firearms manager, himself a recreational sailor, is that all other miniflare guns are also subject to the same restrictions, unlike more powerful fireworks

which may be bought over shop counters. Even the less safe ones are also subject to this bureaucracy, clearly not known by the police official who attempted to explain to me why the Nicosignal's flare storage cylinder was a barrel while another model firing along a tube did not have a barrel and so didn't need documentation.

It seems the 1997 Firearms (Amendment) Act, intended to outlaw short shotguns, also ensnared miniflare guns because of their small size. Signalling apparatus kept on a ship is not a shotgun, even a race officer's mini cannon, but a kayak is not a ship if it can be lifted out of the water. At least, I think that is the position. The experts have told me enough conflicting stories to suggest that the novice not interested in guns has no chance of getting it right if the police are unsure.

While it is possible to go through all the form filling every few years with a similar imposition on two character witnesses, who also have to document a set of four identical photographs of exact specification, the reality is that very few people are prepared to go to all that effort, even if they can find the products on sale in the first place or can replace date expired flares now that chandlers need to have all the documentation of firearms dealers, hardly worth the effort for the potential profit level for many of them. They are not prepared to buy the obligatory gun cabinets, even when officials do not know whether flare guns are supposed to be in or out while drying out after the salt has been washed off.

The fact is that there has never been a negative incident involving a miniflare. Miniflares have a 100% safety record. The same cannot be said for bicycle chains, which have been used as offensive weapons yet don't require this kind of control.

On the other hand there have been fatalities as a direct result of not carrying flares. Lyme Bay was the prime example. If they had been carried on that occasion, all of the participants would surely still be alive and there would have been no need to set up the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority. One good set of bureaucracy deserves another.

Once again this is protection not of the general public but of the bureaucrats. It is to be hoped that this ill thought out piece of legislation can be put right before more innocent lives are lost. Encouraging paddlers to behave safely is not even on the agenda.

Stuart Fisher

Stop press

After writing again to the Minister, I have just been advised by a Home Office Firearms Section officer that the legislation is to be reviewed and that ISKA concerns are being taken into consideration.

Publishers

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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: Jonnie Schofield racing on the Washburn on his way to overall 3rd place in the WWR World Cup series run entirely in the British Isles in a fortnight this year. Jonnie won two of the sprint events and came 2nd in the other. Our most extensive competition coverage ever begins on page 62. Photograph by Peter Schofield.



www.canoeist.co.uk

Please note that this year's copies of *Canoeist* will remain on our website for access by subscribers for the foreseeable future.

Epilogue

It is with regret that I have to inform you that this will be the final issue. It is exactly 30 years since I took over the editorship of what was then the duplicated *White Water Magazine*, building it up without any external support to its high point in 1996 and then attempting to resist what has happened since. This is one of the world's longest running canoeing magazines, if not the oldest, and we have seen good and bad in our 52 years, some notable achievements and a gruelling war of attrition.

The war of attrition

It began quietly enough, items of mail going astray in the post to and from the BCU and unexpected difficulty in obtaining information, any one of which problems alone would have been shrugged off but which were beginning to add up to a picture. It was an incident in 1979 which linked them together. Soon there was no doubt. This had been going on for at least four years by the time we changed from being *White Water Magazine*, an official magazine of the BCU, to the privately owned *Canoeist*. If you want to know what has gone on you will need to ask me privately. Many things were petty but others cost us dearly and have meant that British canoeing has never had a magazine of a standard I would find acceptable.

We have ended up serving the same function as the press in a one party state and have been no more welcome. Many times we have lifted the carpet on what has gone on.

Job within a job

For the last 22 years I have worked a 105 hour week. That is not a complaint. I would not have done it if I had not loved the work, which has been as much a hobby and a very varied way of life. It is interesting that the BCU have had to employ two people to undertake just the competition coverage side of what I have been doing, having started to send out press releases this April. I cannot comprehend how other people can edit canoeing publications without ever going to events, competitions or dry land functions, in some cases never getting into a boat. Strangely, I regularly meet the editors of other watersports magazines and am now on first name terms with some yet I could not pick most canoeing magazine editors out of an identity parade. Perhaps it is not surprising that it is *Canoeist* that TV and the press frequently consult for advice, information and pictures. Our database archive may not be as big as the BCU's but it is probably more accessible and has been essential to the sport. For example, when the local authority in Perth wanted an official document to help resolve the problems at Stanley Weir recently

Canoeist supplied it when nobody else was able to do so. I have previously worked closely with the SCA in preparing for the Land Reform Bill and also the WCA on their Raw Deal access campaign. This year's national polo championships at ExCeL developed from discussions I had at a BMF media dinner and there should be further improvements next year following discussion I had this year with the show director.

While I have no regrets about the hours, I have been frustrated about having to live on half the legal minimum wage and having to forgo attending competitions and symposia because I could not afford to do so, quite apart from the effect on my family. Sometimes I have been the only representative of canoeing and I was specifically asked to speak at a national access symposium at Sheffield's Hallam University to put a non BCU viewpoint (although the BCU have recently come into line with me on the need for legal change). Paddlers International played an important role in the recent symposium in London on the Water Framework Directive, which has the potential to cause serious problems for canoeing.

At times I have even written for other titles to get our message across to people who would not read canoeing publications, such technical journals as *Water & Environment Manager*, *Countryside Recreation* and *New Civil Engineer*.

The BCU have kept a wall of silence about what we have done for them. When they could not avoid mentioning us on one occasion about a decade ago there was reference to canoeist (sic) which would have looked like a typographical error to those not in the know. They have tried to take the credit for themselves for everything possible. They trump their meetings with Alun Michael, not mentioning that *Canoeist* had already talked to him a couple of times first, as I have done with other Government Ministers. Indeed, I have twice talked to Alun Michael while he was changing his shoes, a novel way of getting a captive audience. Since the last issue Paddlers International has begun a dialogue with the Conservatives which will now cease. I have also held a meeting with BW to address a range of technical



Some of our access articles you will probably not have read: *Water & Environment Manager* (Oct 2002) and *Countryside Recreation* (Autumn/Winter 2004).

matters, which might continue as I also invited the Canoe-Camping Club and BCU to attend, BW currently examining the issues raised.

My presence at most of the Lyme Bay trial and its coverage in *Canoeist* may well have helped prevent such draconian measures as the imposition of support boats for canoe groups. As the only member of the media at most of the Wye public inquiry I was privileged to have dialogues with the inspector not open to others. The EA knew I would challenge them on their behaviour and Alun Michael was a known reader of *Canoeist*. This is the only canoeing magazine ever to have been quoted in a House of Commons debate. I was one of the few holding out for a public inquiry over the EA's attempts to write into law the requirement for canoeists to have third party insurance. The ICF will also be pleased to cease attention to their bullying of dragon boat racing as most publications do not have knowledge of what is going on.

Danger in numbers

One trader told me the other day that he did not believe the EA would impose third party insurance. The same person told me some years ago that he did not believe any magazine would quote more than double their true sales figures. I believe there has been regular quoting of sales figures high by a factor of 20. Total newstrade sales of all canoeing magazines in Britain are probably about 30% of what they were a decade ago. Less canoeing shops are selling magazines than in the past. The sport is getting much less public exposure than previously.

It would only be a matter of time before the trade cottoned on to what was happening and everything returned to normal, wouldn't it? They would notice the lack of readers with anything to sell through classified advertisements, for example, wouldn't they? Apparently not. It seems they have become so used to having large numbers quoted that they are unwilling to support anyone quoting anything less.

As a sport we have gone from bankside traders to reputable shops and are now seeing the growth of people importing and selling out of garages again, relying on websites and word of mouth to get themselves known. It is no wonder that competition participation is falling. As the compiler of the national boat directory, recently I was attempting to find out who is importing one significant range of competition kayaks shown in this issue, without success. What chance does Joe Public have?

By way of contrast, another watersport sends me two magazine titles, each with the better part of 200 pages per month, half of them advertising. They have a quarter of our number of participants but

they are positive about their future while our industry is patchy at best. Since I announced our cessation to the trade I have been told of merger, sellout and closure situations which have happened or are due to happen later this year within the canoe trade.

Over the last few years we have seen a number of canoeing magazine launch attempts in Britain, only some of which have survived. We have more magazines than the French, more than the Germans, more than even the Americans who have ten times our size of market. 'Who is funding all these magazines?' asked somebody with more knowledge than most about canoe publishing in Britain.

The highs

If it all sounds doom and gloom it hasn't been. We have had some great successes, including being the world's first canoeing magazine to publish every month in full colour throughout.

We were honoured to receive the Periodical Publishers Association's inaugural Achievement Award in 2003, by far the smallest company ever to receive a PPA Award, the only sports title across the whole spectrum of awards that year. The newstrade know what is going on in canoeing even if the canoe trade don't as it has already happened elsewhere within their industry.

I have read and reviewed books for you running well into four figures, a vast library of canoeing knowledge. I believe I have attended and reported on more world level canoeing competitions than anyone else, anywhere, ever. Competition coverage is the most time and finance consuming part of the job away from the office and the aspect from which the BCU derive most benefit, nearly half of their members being people who have had to join to take part in competition. The notable exception is the Olympic Games which I have only been able to attend once, needing BOA approval each time, a story in itself including an alleged dazzling sequence of successive losses by Royal Mail in 2004 before the accreditation closing date.

I have been able to travel into jungle, outback, Great Lakes and many other fascinating parts of the world. The very best part of all has been the paddling, which I would not trade for any part of the job. How anyone can produce a magazine on a subject in which he is not interested defies my comprehension.

A by product of writing the guides is that I can now claim to be the only person to have paddled the whole of the British mainland coastline solo and to have paddled more of the coastline than anyone else. I have also paddled all the permitted and physically paddlable British canals over 10km long. All that is without counting the rivers, permitted and otherwise.

Copyright Adrian Brooks



The glazed look. I don't get a lot of practice at award ceremonies from that end of the camera.



We had the news because we went and got it.

Digital format

This year we have become the world's only national canoeing magazine to be published digitally every month and have become the world's largest sized canoeing magazine published every month.

OK, many of you do not like the concept and the trade's distrust and almost total lack of support is mirrored to a degree in other digital publishing around the world although, paradoxically, there is a 10% shortfall in staff to work in the industry, so fast is its growth.

It was not a whim. By the second half of last year I was paying about £2,000 per month out of my own pocket to make up the shortfall of trade advertising support. With large print and postage bills plus travel and accommodation costs we were in an unsustainable position. Moving to digital allowed us to ditch the majority of our costs although the dwindling away of remaining trade support has still meant a lack of salary this year.

I believe these digital issues have included our best ever. This month's is the largest ever issue of a monthly canoeing magazine. Ironically, it includes coverage of a groundbreaking World Cup series held in this country which no other editor bothered to attend, as far as I am aware.

We knew not everyone would have computer access and it has been hard abandoning subscribers inherited 30 years ago. I had not anticipated the hatred of computers by those who have all the toys and use them every day. Regardless, we had no option. Without the digital format we would have folded at the end of last year, earlier with a less tolerant financial controller, a point for those tempted to say 'Serves you right.'

I have to admit to being genuinely moved by the fact that even the senders of the most vitriolic comments about our digital format would often end by saying that there is nothing to match *Canoeist* on paper. I am also surprised that we have had so few technical problems with what was new territory for many readers and I quailed at the thought of having to give technical support.

Finally

One BCU employee has been very keen to get us back on paper. One withdrew a promised article because of the digital format. One senior BCU official berated us about the loss of his paper magazine, being satisfied only once he had accepted that the problems were financial. Apart from those there has been six months of total silence from BCU officialdom about the departure of what may be the world's senior canoeing magazine from the high street. Some things don't change.

They ought to be concerned. They lose not only their best shop window for the public but also all the support which comes from it and the unpaid informed campaigning which has woken up everyone from the EA to Alun Michael. No other canoeing publication would be in a position to do anything about it even if they wanted to and the editorial absence from even the Llangollen protest rally suggests a fair degree of apathy.

The fact that I need to be a journalist to get access to the information and to the people with influence means that the support I give to canoeing will all collapse together.

I regret that I have not managed to get the trade support for the International Sea Kayak Association and Paddlers International, as John Ramwell failed before me, but both names have already appeared on Ministerial desks or in important national symposia this year. These will also fold unless anyone else wants to take them on.

While we have not had the support of many of the trade of late, we have some significant thanks to give for loyal support over the years. In particular, Gaybo didn't miss advertising in an issue for 25 years. White Water Consultancy International have been a pillar of strength over recent years and the West Midlands Canoe Centre have supported us strongly this year, especially with exhibition space. Our previous printers, Manson in St Albans, have been very tolerant with us in getting our affairs straight. Thank you all.

I have to thank all our readers and subscribers over the years. Without you, quite simply, it would not have happened.

I have to thank literally thousands of people who have contributed articles, pictures, information, enthusiasm and much more over three decades and have continued to do so even at a time when others were able to buy off major contributors. Much as I would like to start naming names, it would be difficult to know where to stop as my contributor index runs to nearly 40 pages and includes most people of significance in British canoeing since 1975.

Lastly, I have to thank my wife, Becky, and sons, Brendan and Ross, for tolerating a way of life not of their choosing, even the boys having attended more canoeing competitions than other canoeing magazine editors. While we do not have the rewards we might have expected for the decades of long hours put in, we have been able to play a significant and unique role in a relatively small sport and pastime.

Stuart Fisher



Celebrating completion of the best paddle I have ever done.

Commuting paddlers

If you commute to work by canoe in the Yorkshire and Lincolnshire area, BBC TV's *Inside Out* would like to hear from you. Someone who does just that is a Leicestershire policeman who is reported to paddle in full uniform including his helmet.

Nene Centre price rises

Charges at the Nene Whitewater Centre are rising from the beginning of June to reflect increasing costs in insurance and electricity for operating the pumps. Adult non members now pay £10 with discounts for certain groups.

MUFC raft Tryweryn

The Manchester United football team have been amongst recent rafters on the Tryweryn. They were not recognized on the river but when they went to a chip shop in Bala a quick witted member of staff presented them with a football to sign, subsequently raffling it for a tidy sum for charity.

Cardiff Bay festival

A Cardiff Bay canoe festival is to take place on 25/26th Jun with trade stands, information, have a go sessions for beginners and sprint and polo to watch. Coaching will also be available. [029 2087 7954]

Tryweryn staff leaving

Dave Ayres draws attention to the impending retirement of Anne and Allan from the Tryweryn café in September. He suggests thanks are in order from customers for all the years they have put up with paddlers.

Undercurrents

Trips

Eight teenagers from the Adventure Dolphin Centre in Pangbourne, together with four adults, are to undertake a three week open canoe expedition in the Rockies as part of their Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award. They will be up to 5 days away from civilization. They have each raised £1,800 in order to take part.

In the first attempt to cross the Arctic Ocean in summer, Lonnie Dupre, a 2004 Rolex Awards for Enterprise Laureate, and his fellow explorer, Eric Larsen, set off on 10th May from Siberia's Cape Arctichesky on a 2,250km journey with no external support. On each day of their 100 day expedition the two Americans would have to overcome the challenge of constantly shifting fractured sea ice and open water in one of the most hostile regions on the planet. They planned to reach the North Pole around mid July and to make landfall on Ellesmere Island, Canada, by the beginning of September. As a large amount of the ice cover melts in the summer, 30 to 50% of their journey would be over water. The two explorers designed sledges that would double as canoes for crossing the vast expanses of water. At that time of year temperatures range from -10°C to +4°C. On the downside, at those temperatures it would be humid and damp with dense fog. This would make it hard to stay dry and a constant fight to ward off hypothermia. The fog would make navigation extremely difficult. The two men hoped to cover 22 kilometres a day, putting in 10 hour days. They would consume up to 6.5 kilocalories per day, double the normal daily intake. Laden with four months of provisions, each sledge/canoe weighed 140kg at the outset. Greenpeace would send a ship, *The Arctic Sunrise*, to meet the two explorers at the end of their journey. Lonnie, 43, knows the Arctic well. Over the past 17 years he has covered 25,000km in the Arctic on skis, by kayak, by dog sledge and on foot, has led five polar expeditions and has accomplished the first complete tour of Greenland by dog sledge and kayak. It was during that expedition that the idea for the current polar crossing was born. In 2001, on reaching the eastern coast of Greenland where, according to his map, there should have been a glacier jutting out into the sea, Lonnie was confronted with hard evidence of global warming: the glacier no longer existed. It was just one example of many but it triggered an alarm bell which he wants to keep ringing. The expedition was to come to a premature end on Jun 3rd when the pair called to be airlifted off. Ironically, for an expedition out to draw attention to global warming, unusually deep snow this year, combined with numerous leads each day that they needed to negotiate, taking up valuable time, made it difficult to move forward. Strong southerly drift erased their progress each night as they slept. Since leaving on May 10th the team travelled 240km but made just 72km northward toward the North Pole. They had only a few days of conditions where they could use their skis and even then could not make the daily distance required by the expedition plan. Dangerous broken icefields of small pans and brash ice joined by thin layers of sea ice which would not support the team's weight, forcing them to swim and break their way forward, constantly moved in a gyrosopic action. Snow fell most days, building up a deep layer through which travel was extremely difficult and slow. Daily temperatures spiked above freezing, causing the snow to

turn to slush. Combined, these factors made it impossible for them to continue with any hope of reaching their goal before winter storms set in. Lonnie and Eric are currently considering a North Pole to Greenland attempt either this summer or in summer 2006, also something that has never been done before. Sean Morley was much looking forward to paddling round South Georgia later this year, a solo trip which has been widely announced. However, Nigel Dennis, Peter Bray, Jeff Allan and Hadas Feldman have jumped in ahead of him, booking the obligatory support vessel. Sean does not think it an appropriate place to race and has abandoned his plans. A New Zealand trip is also planned, expected for February.

A Danish team are to attempt to paddle the Northwest Passage in a single season.

2,220km is the length of the Swedish coastline and 2220 is an attempt to paddle it in 60 days by John Paul Bichard and wife Louisa Rolandsdotter. Just over 70 people have done it so far with the male record standing at 23 days and the female at 63 days. They hope to produce a book afterwards.

BCU membership fees

The fact that officials need to be paid up BCU members in order to work for the sport as slalom judges or other administrators at international events abroad has been a cause for irritation. The BCU are now considering associate membership in order to reduce the punitive burden on such volunteers.

Writing on tax rules, a *Daily Telegraph* article began with reference to the Residential Landlords' Association from whom the Inland Revenue are claiming £30,000 in unpaid tax. The article then used the BCU as an example of a change of interpretation of tax rules on membership services by the Inland Revenue. 'This could include organizations such as the British Canoe Union, which sells members third party liability insurance through broker Perkins Slade and boat insurance through N W Brown.

'The BCU was unable to confirm whether it takes advantage of its mutual status.' Could boat licences come into the same category? The BCU say it does not apply as they do not make a commercial profit.

Achieving the impossible

Winston Churchill Travelling Fellowship categories have been announced for 2006. As well as the Mike Jones Award for Canoeing there non canoeing categories for Adventure, Exploration & Leaders of Expeditions and Young People which may be of interest to those involved in canoeing. Completed application forms need to be returned by Oct 20th. Paralyzed Al Moncrief-Smith, who won an award in 2002, said that 'to achieve the impossible, you must attempt the impossible.' [020 7581 0410]

Boat show star

'Star of new Channel 5 show to appear at Crick Boat Show' began the press release. I groaned. No, it was Belinda the otter, appearing with brother Bertie. Painting by otter and regular lectures on the animals were part of the boat show's theme of Nature on the Waterways. Other activities were to include bell boat racing for children.



Lonnie Dupre and Eric Larsen set out in the sunshine on their attempted polar crossing.



Mark Warford/Greenpeace photographs





The Princess Royal opens the £1,000,000 Stithians Lake angling and watersports centre near Redruth with state of the art classrooms, IT access, boat and equipment storage, clubroom and changing facilities. The lake creates local jobs and brings over £1,000,000 to the local economy.

And I quote...

... from a press release by the National Maritime Museum Cornwall: 'Cornwall was the first county to hear of the death of the nation's most celebrated hero, Vice Admiral Horatio Nelson in 1805... the whole county is working together giving street parties, regattas, seafood festivals, lectures, musicals and exhibitions, climaxing with a symbolic recreation of the news of Nelson's death coming to Falmouth on 4 August.'

Lottery funding misuse

When John Major set up the Lottery he allocated 20% to sport. In 1998 the Labour Government reduced this to 16.6% and falling ticket sales have resulted in further decline. Speaking ahead of the election, he called for the next government to use Lottery funding to support elite sport and innovative projects, as originally intended, and fund grassroots sport from conventional Exchequer sources.

In her final presentation to the CCPR annual conference before changing jobs, chief executive Margaret Talbot compared the £21 per year spent per head on sport in this country with £51 in Australia, £76 in Canada and £112 in France, suggesting it may be why we are top of the heart attack and obesity leagues and bottom of the physical activity participation league. Rather than using sport budgets for tackling health and crime issues, for which there are other massively larger budgets, sport should be supported. A 0.5% shift from health would double the sport budget.



Jim Knight.

Government reshuffle

In the Cabinet reshuffle Alun Michael has been promoted to Minister of State in the Dept of Trade & Industry. His place as Parliamentary Secretary (Rural Affairs, Landscape & Biodiversity), including inland waterways, BW and access, has been given to Jim Knight, who has

been an MP for 4 years. 40 years old, he was educated at Cambridge and has since run a small publishing company in the West Country and been involved with travelling theatre. Margaret Becket remains Secretary of State at the DEFRA and Elliot Morley as Minister of



Clare County Council are building a new visitor centre at the Cliffs of Moher, expected to be ready for 2007. Until then you will have to make do with the rather better view of Ireland's highest cliffs from your sea kayak.



BCU president Albert Woods unveils an interpretation panel for the 50km Lough Erne Canoe Trail (Jun 04, p11), the first in Northern Ireland. Watching are canoe development officer Matt Peach, Robert Gibson of Fermanagh District Council and Dawson Stelfox, chairman of the Countryside Access & Activities Network. The trail has 10 interpretation panels. The Upper Lough is a maze of islands and slow channels while the Lower Lough has open water at the foot of the Cuilcagh Mountains.



Sean Morley has been voted the RNLi's individual Supporter of the Year and received his award in London from the Duke of Kent in May. He has now raised over £8,600 for them and for the Marine Conservation Society.

State including the EA. Tessa Jowell keeps Communications, Media & Sport with Richard Caborn still her Minister of State for Sport. White water paddler Gareth Thomas remains Parliamentary Secretary at the Department for International Development. Note that BW and the EA report to different people.

Interestingly, the Waterways Ombudsman Committee is being chaired by Professor Jeffrey Jowell, the Secretary of State's husband.

Watersports participation rebounds

The annual report by the RYA, Sunsail and the BMF into watersports participation by those over 16 years old shows canoeing having recovered between Sep 03 and Sep 04 from its large drop over the previous year. This is in line with other watersports. It still shows canoeing with nearly twice the participation rate of any other watersport, canoeing now being put at 2.7% involvement by the adult population compared with 8.1% for all watersports. However, 19.5% of participants only canoe abroad. Taking a younger cutoff age would surely move the figures further in favour of canoeing.

Money for sustainable projects

£200,000 in grants is on offer through national parks for sustainable projects. The Broads Authority are enthusiastic. The last batch of awards included:

* Lawrence Chapman was awarded £935 towards a £2,335 project to help special needs pupils at the



Tring Water Rats celebrating their 10th birthday at Rushey Lock on the upper Thames on the May Day bank holiday, ages 9 to 50+ and in playboats to open canoes.

Ashley School go canoeing on the Broads and undertake a Duke of Edinburgh's Award. He also received another award for camping equipment for special needs Scouts. (If the name seems familiar you may recall he did research which showed canoeing does not disturb angling, which he reported in our Jun 97 issue, p16.)

* The Broads Tourism Forum received £1,000 of £6,367 needed for a sustainable tourism leaflet for the Broads.

* The Waveney River Centre received 50% of the £1,462 they needed for the first two canoes for their hire centre on the southern Broads.

* The Broads Canoe Hire Association received £25,098 of £58,156 needed to develop the Broads Canoe Network, funding a 2 year project to re-equip and promote the network, establish 2 new hire centres, develop new tourist routes and produce new guides.

* Risk & Policy Analysts were funded to complete research on the feasibility of a sustainable canoe/camping tourism package based on floating ecolodges in quiet areas of the Broads.

What have the other national parks achieved, then?

Low hits

It has been revealed that the BCU website is only getting about 5,000 hits per month. They are planning to revamp it in the hope of doing better.

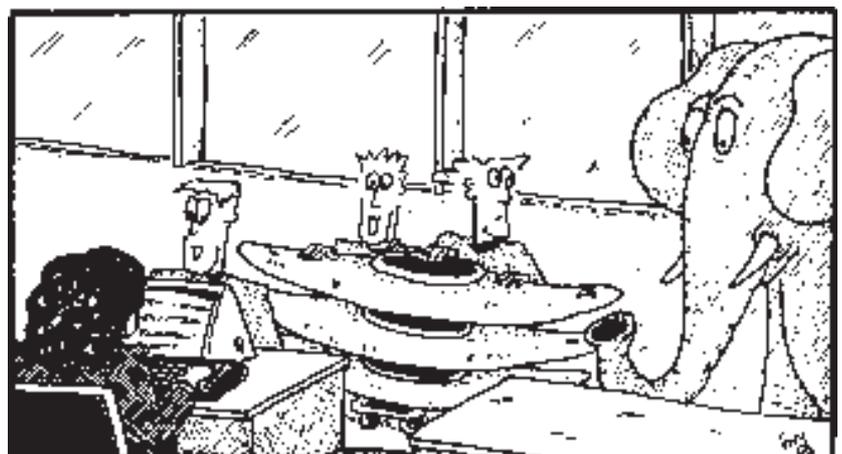
View sunken boats

The Wherryman's Festival of the Yare included a 2 hour canoe trail round Rockland Broad to view sunken wherries. With instructors from Active-8, it cost £10 per adult with children half price, three start times through the day. It was one of many activities in the area to celebrate a new long distance footpath.

Red team to play blue team

You will remember *Why we couldn't win Trafalgar today* (Jan, p65) and all the PC reasons given. Next month's re-enactment in the Solent of this decisive sea battle will have one major difference from the original. Instead of the British fleet taking on the combined Spanish and French fleets the Red Fleet will do battle with the Blue Fleet in order not to offend French sensibilities.

UP THE CREEK



... do I check the elephant in first or the guys with the kayaks?

ACCESS & environment

A bridge too far

A plan to build a bridge to link Easdale with Seil has not been welcomed by Easdale residents. They prefer their privacy.

Cardiff course

The Cardiff Bay white water course is expected to go ahead at the end of the year. 250m long, it will be pumped at up to 16m³/s.

Ducking the issue

BW are hoping to collect duckweed from the River Lea to turn into compost. Nobody will be able to say that it isn't green.

DEFRA foot and mouth strategy

A DEFRA report looks at ways of dealing with any future foot and mouth disease outbreak. It is accepted that more use will be made of vaccination, despite the increased cost and a new EU directive demanding killing in preference.

Another missed opportunity

New Rural Affairs Minister Jim Knight was present at Ribbleshead on May 28th to celebrate the increase of accessibility of the Yorkshire Dales National Park from 4% to 62% for walkers. Canoeists did not demonstrate.

Farigaig threat continues

The SCA are to discuss the ongoing threat to the Farigaig with developers Greenpower. John Picken would like to hear from paddlers of the river. [01467 671315]

Slimline Broads Authority

Broads Authority membership has been reduced from 35 to 21 in line with Government policy for national parks. The Countryside Agency have lost their two seats on the authority and the EA and English Nature have each lost their one seat.



The Pembrokeshire Marine Code has been published, a folder in English or Welsh containing a bundle of leaflets for coastal users. They vary from those advising on avoidance of disturbance of wildlife to acceptance that tourism is Pembrokeshire's main industry. They include a well written leaflet entitled *Canoeing & Kayaking with sound advice on the Daugleddau and Milford Haven, Bitches, open coast and surf breaks.* Some of the

suggested kit may not be needed, such as helmets for all of these locations, but it is better to err on the side of caution.

For protection of wildlife the following policy is advised:

Be considerate

Keep your distance from marine wildlife and do not touch, feed or swim with it. You should also avoid hauling out or mooring close to young animals as this could distress near by parent animals and prevent them feeding or approaching.

Keep your distance and an even speed

Stay at least 100 metres away from marine wildlife and nesting/breeding sites where possible and remain no longer than 15 minutes. You should also avoid erratic movements and changes in speed.

Think about where you are going

Try to steer clear of cliffs, gullies and enclosed bays as many wildlife species use these areas to breed.

React to what is around you

Allow marine wildlife to go where they want. If they approach your watercraft you should remain on steady course and maintain a safe, navigable speed.

Protect what you see

Help to look after marine wildlife by avoiding unnecessary noise. If you observe deliberate disturbance or harassment of wildlife, report it to the Police Marine Unit on 01646 621162. If possible take photographs or video the incident and write a description of what you have seen.

By following the code you will help ensure Pembrokeshire's wildlife is protected. You will also reduce the risk of committing an offence.

Beaches fail in rain

The Marine Conservation Society's *Good Beach Guide* claims that the number of UK beaches failing to meet EU standards last year doubled from the previous year. The reason is given as high rainfall resulting in agricultural chemicals washing off the land. If the results depend on the weather to that extent it must be questioned how reliable they are in the long term and whether the scores need to be read in conjunction with the weather records. [01989 566017]

No improvement at Culham

Work at Culham lock on the Thames now appears virtually complete without any improvement at the downstream end where those in canoes find the walkway at nearly head height when standing, reached



Work at Shepperton has included a portage take out point.

by climbing up a ladder. The Thames is just about the only river where the EA repeatedly talk about use by canoeists and other boaters and what they are doing for them, mostly lock related. Repair work on other locks is usually given widespread publicity. They are to include a canoe portage route at Chertsey, however.

Ill thought out Gloucester & Sharpness rules

BW issued new use rules for the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal last month as follows:

Guidance notes for canoe clubs using the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal

1. The Gloucester & Sharpness Canal and Gloucester Docks have a centre depth of 18 feet and piled sides.
2. All permitted groups must be BCU or affiliated members and will be issued with a permit suitable for use afloat which *must* be carried by the leader of the group. Waterway staff have instructions not to allow groups onto the water unless the permit is carried as proof of permission and acceptance of these guidelines.
3. The competence levels referred to equate to BCU and their recommendations relating to safe use and practice shall apply.
4. The minimum size of group shall be three canoeists. Where any member of the group does not hold a 2 Star qualification or above, the group must include an instructor and at least one competent paddler at that level. A limit of six learners to one instructor should be applied. Where all members of the group are 2 Star or above, the minimum number applies but no upper limit.
5. Care should be exercised at bridges. Although canoeists are not expected to wait for traffic lights to be changed when there is no other traffic, they must comply with the bridge keeper's instructions when boats are passing through the bridge. Failure to do so or causing nuisance to others could lead to revocation of the permit. Bridge keepers will always advise of events or large craft or ship movements if you ask them. If you meet a ship, move to the side out of the way.

This permit may only be used by the group to whom it is issued.

Not transferable.

The suspicion is that the notes have come from someone with a rather limited view of what canoeing involves and ability levels and it is to be hoped that they will be rethought once the implications have been spelled out.

Canal safety

At the end of May Paddlers International held a meeting with BW's technical director Stewart Sim, head of safety Tony Stammers and SE general manager Jerry Appleyard, a Devizes to Westminster Race competitor of the 1980s. I also invited Kevin East of the Canoe-Camping Club and BCU and Chris Hawkesworth of the BCU. This followed on from a discussion I had with BW chairman Dr George Greener in March.

I wanted to raise the issue of a number of restrictions for canoeists on canals, some of which I feel are not necessary or could be better addressed.

Use of tunnels

Canoeists are barred from a number of tunnels on safety grounds. Sometimes the alternative routes are more dangerous. I would prefer the safer line to be permitted.

Blisworth, Grand Union Canal

The portage route is along a fast unclassified road with no footway and limited sightlines at the northern end. Crick is similar.

Tardebigge, Worcester & Birmingham

Part of the path had been ploughed up by the local farmer when we went. Trying to keep a lightweight kayak parallel to the crash barrier on the central reserve of the A448 as traffic roars by on each side a couple of metres away is not one of the more relaxing aspects of canal travel. Hopefully, restoration of the Grantham will remove a similar situation with the A52 at Gamston.

Chirk and Whitehouse, Llangollen Branch

These tunnels have the towpath through them. When carrying a canoe on the shoulder it is necessary to lean away from it for balance. The curve of the tunnel profile requires the carrier to lean towards it. Carrying the canoe means that it is hard to see the rusty handrailing at leg level or the ground, which is very uneven. The chance of sustaining minor leg or head abrasions is high. These tunnels used to be open to canoeists.

Harecastle, Trent & Mersey

The portage route passes through the middle of a large gypsy encampment with dogs and an intimidating atmosphere. After I walked it with my son, the owner of the first narrowboat waiting to go through told me that, as a youth, he had bought a 17.5p passage ticket, as required in those days, and had then presented himself with his kayak; as he had a ticket the staff had to let him go through.

Froghall, Caldon

At 69m long, this is little more than a glorified bridge and is at an extremity of the canal system which sees few powered craft. Snarestone on the Ashby-de-la-Zouch is similar.

Foulridge and Gannow, Leeds & Liverpool, and Islington, Regent's

These have all been allowed for canoe marathon races but paddlers who do not have other competitors as their primary concern, are less tired and are using more stable boats are not allowed to go through. All involve long and complex portages well away from the canal environment (a motorway roundabout with a carpet of broken glass, housing estates, an urban market). I cannot recall any BW tunnel where the portage route is marked. Paddling in a tunnel is similar to paddling at night. The paddler may be further from easy exit but there should be no problem for a competent canoeist.

Freight waterways

With current attempts to encourage freight back onto the water there is concern that some people see a conflict of interests, requiring small craft to be excluded. This seems to depend on the views and experience of the local manager at the time. Former CEO Dave Fletcher told me that he thought there should be no BW waters from which any craft should be excluded but some managers, particularly in northeast England, seem to disagree and to have the last word. As a canoeist, I feel happier in the presence of a freight vessel under the control of a professional helm than I do in the presence of a hired narrowboat in a crosswind under the control of a novice with a G+ T on the roof in front of him. The dependence on the view of the local manager can result in a canal being permitted for a while and then banned again. I was finally allowed to use the Sheffield & S Yorks after it was admitted there were very few freight vessels using it and I did not see another moving craft along the entire length of the navigation but I understand the ban has now been reinstated. The Gloucester & Sharpness has been allowed at some times and not at others. The Aire & Calder has never been allowed in recent decades.



Dr George Greener unveils the plaque to mark the bicentenary of the Blisworth Tunnel, finally opened in June 1805.

The scale of construction for larger craft can result in some thought having to be given to the logistics. Launching into Gloucester Basin is complicated by the rounded edges to the quayside. Finding a place to take out at Castleford after paddling the Calder & Hebble involves a bit of searching. On the other hand, reaching the Thames from Limehouse Basin is difficult and negotiating Torksey Lock on the Fossdyke, the new People Pipe under the A5 on the Grand Union at Long Buckby or Hell Meadow Lock on the Leeds & Liverpool, all open for small craft use, requires near commando tactics. I doubt if it is possible to get a canoe round the bend under the railway past the Bruce Tunnel on the Kennet & Avon. Equally, on the sea or on a river it is not always possible to land at will. The user needs to be confident of ability and know what is involved before embarking. Education and guidance are needed, not restriction.

This also applies to locations such as weirs, where a competent rough water paddler will often have a better idea of what is safe than a BW employee will. I commend BW's use of 'at your own risk' notices such as I have seen on a weir leading off the Caledonian onto the River Oich. Some weirs can prove important rough water sites in parts of the country where these are in short supply, eg the weir which was used as a slalom site for some years next to the National Trust's Wey Navigation in Guildford.

Fences across towpaths

Fences on the Wigan flight of the Leeds & Liverpool have bike shaped slots in them. These do not take canoes and even cyclists seem to find it easier to lift their bikes over. On the same canal there are fences across the towpath with gaps which slope inwards, the opposite way to normal cattle proof fences across footpaths. They seem intended to make life difficult for cyclists while letting animals through but are equally awkward for anyone carrying a boat down a lock flight.

On the Kennet & Avon gates have been fitted across the towpath in places. At Marsh Benham, for example, the gate is flush with the road on a blind corner. Anyone trying to open or close the gate while accompanied by a canoe, bike or pushchair is at risk of being involved in an accident. If it is really thought desirable to have these they should be inset from the road by at least 5m which would allow a double canoe to get clear of the road before struggling with the gate. I am sure it would have been found wedged open after the Devizes to Westminster Race.

BW's concern with tunnels is the inability of narrowboat users to see what is ahead from the stern control position and, thus, a low down and less well lit craft. There is potential for accidents if canoeists are not spotted. They quoted the case of two ladies who were frightened of the 2.5km long West Hills tunnel on the Worcester & Birmingham so they set their boat in motion and walked over the tunnel to meet it at the other end. BW are proposing a landing place at each end of every tunnel. Kevin suggested that the Countryside & Rights of Way Act could be used to improve portage paths. As far as freight craft are concerned, lock keepers are in touch with them all by VHF radio and could advise them to watch out for any canoeists known to be present.

It was also revealed that BW have given the BCU £30,000 for a feasibility study for a tilting design of white water course for use in Liverpool docks while the BCU pay BW £68,000 per year for canal licences.

BW are to review all the issues and report back.

CIWEM issue statement on access

On Jun 6th the Chartered Institution of Water & Environmental Management issued the following statement. While I set the ball rolling in their house magazine to draw attention to the access issue three years ago this is the first time that they have publicly accepted that there is a problem to be addressed.

Sustainable management of inland waterways:

Water sports, holiday hot spots and turf related spots

CIWEM, the professional body for environmental managers, today called for better co-ordination between those managing conflicting priorities for inland waterways, and for more attention to be given to making water-related recreation possible near where people live and work. Minor watercourses in towns and cities were highlighted as particularly important in the new Policy Position Statement from the organization: 'Urban watercourses, no matter how small, should be identified as a valued asset for all the community,' said Justin Taberham, CIWEM's Director of Policy.¹

Recreational use of inland waters and adjacent land enhances the quality of people's lives and fosters a better understanding of the environment.² Waterways projects may be designed to serve purposes that are primarily economic/social/environmental or a combination thereof (regeneration, flood risk management, abstraction and discharge, habitat enhancement, and heritage conservation, to name but a few) but there is almost always a recreational element, whether planned or not – people can't stay away from water. The figures bear this out: every year at least 5 million people make recreational use of inland waterways.³

Inland waters are now receiving considerable policy attention, with many projects in hand to restore canals and create new waterway links. Implementation of the Water Framework Directive should lead to enhanced water quality and more integrated management. CIWEM believes that a more concerted and holistic approach among the relevant organizations would offer an even wider range of benefits and contribute to sustainable recreational use. Particular needs that could be met through improved co-ordination are:

* Improving information and advice (eg websites to promote opportunities, and practical guidance for waterway managers on safety issues);

* Developing voluntary agreements (eg to facilitate access for canoeing, especially touring, to a wider number and range of rivers valued for angling);

* Making better use of economic instruments (eg applying grant aid to waterways projects, and reinvesting fees and charges in recreational improvements); and

* Regulation (eg raising standards for boat safety to minimize accidents and conflicts).

There are fisheries on at least 13,700km of 'major' rivers and canals (68% of the total length). On these waters there are some 8,800km of well-known angling beats. Public rights of navigation and water available for licensed navigation amount to 5,090km of inland canals and major rivers in England and Wales. Just over 40% of this resource is within 15km of a major urban area. It is however unevenly distributed, with a relatively high per capita resource in East Anglia and a low per capita

resource in the South East of England. Over 10 million people visited British Waterway's navigable waterways in 1994. Canoeing takes place on all major river navigations and canals. There are formal access agreements on only 812 km of waterways that are not subject to a public right of navigation. Informal canoeing is promoted in guidebooks on some 7,000km of major rivers with no public rights of navigation.

Around half of England and Wales's 2,000 enclosed waters of more than a hectare support recreational uses. Angling occurs on 88% of these enclosed waters, sailing on 28%, wind-surfing on 19% and canoeing on 14%. At the same time, almost 500 enclosed waters of one hectare or more are notified in part or whole as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and, in some cases, protecting the interests of the environmental designations has frustrated proposals for recreational use of inland waters. Sustainable management and development of watercourses requires closer collaboration between local authorities, public agencies, riparian owners and waterway users in all their diversity.

CIWEM considers that conflicts between different recreational users (eg anglers and canoeists) and between recreation and other interests (eg agriculture, conservation) can often be avoided through sensitive use of management techniques. The Policy Position Statement singles out Canolfan Tryweryn (Tryweryn White Water Centre) near Bala, North Wales, as a good example of how the potentially conflicting needs of conservation and recreation can be managed and accommodated at a site that attracts around 70,000 visitors each year.

1. CIWEM's Policy Position Statement *Recreational Use of Inland Waters* is online at

<http://www.ciwem.org.uk/policy/policies/waterways.asp>.

2. The term 'inland waters and adjacent land' here includes all rivers and canals, larger streams ('Critical Ordinary Watercourses'), lakes and also smaller streams and ponds, and wetlands that offer recreational opportunities.

3. In 1998, 5 million people made trips that involved some use of inland water. 68% of the total length of Britain's major rivers and canals attract fishers. In 1994, 10 million people visited British Waterway's navigable waterways. Canoeing takes place on all major river navigations and canals, plus there are formal access agreements over 812km of waterways that are not subject to a public right of navigation.

4. The Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management (CIWEM) is an independent charity working for the environment. Our thousands of members in 96 countries include scientists, engineers and other environmental professionals, as well as students and interested members of the public. See www.ciwem.org.

5. CIWEM members are involved in a wide range of activities which have the potential to affect recreational use of inland waters and adjacent land. Examples include: policies for land-use planning, water abstraction and discharge, fisheries and navigation, and the design, construction and management of flood defences, water-control structures and bridges. CIWEM considers that all opportunities should be taken in such activities to protect and increase recreational use of inland waters and adjacent land as part of a holistic approach to the environment.

Conservatives think that access agreements will solve problems

Paddlers International have now received a statement of the Conservatives' position on access:

Conservatives believe that it is important to maximize the diverse use of our rivers. We also recognize the value of canoeing as both a popular and successful Olympic sport, and participation should be encouraged amongst our budding young sports enthusiasts as much as possible. We believe that the success of our canoe team at the Athens Olympics has given this issue fresh impetus.

James Gray MP, the then Shadow Rural Affairs Minister, launched our Charter for Country Sports last October. It recognizes the importance of achieving the coexistence between the two most popular river sports - fishing and canoeing, and states that a Conservative Government will seek to encourage access agreements between the various parties.

Oliver Letwin

INCIDENT FILE

Fraser Champion drowned on first descent

Fraz Champion has died on the White River in western Newfoundland. He was attempting the first full descent of some serious upper sections with my brother, Kevin England, and others. In one of the most difficult sections his spraydeck imploded and he was last seen trying to roll upstream of a portage. The team chased him but never caught up. He was located by helicopter the following morning. Fraz had been particularly excited about this trip, even though it meant taking time out from his increasingly happily settled life here in New Zealand with his partner, Rosie Pongratz, and dog, Toa. He will be missed greatly by this community, from the school children and staff on whom he has recently made a big impact to the heli pilots, rafting companies, farmers and everyone else with whom he's worked, not least his friends and family.

Andy England

No need for a helicopter

A board surfer was blown onto rocks 50m from the shore at Woolacombe on the May Day bank holiday Monday. He had no significant injuries. Kayak paddlers were on the scene but the surfer did not want to jump back into the water. A buoyancy aid was offered to the surfer. Despite being 50m from the shore the coastguard called a helicopter. Surf rescue turned up on board. The surfer eventually jumped back in and was towed by the surf rescue to another rock. The helicopter arrived and winched the surfer on board then deposited him back on land. An effective rescue could have been carried out by suitable kayaks and throwbags in this case as conditions were not severe.

Alan F Fox

Gaur drowning

A 35 year old man was drowned on the grade 4 River Gaur on May 22nd. The river, which is HEP controlled, had been running at a gauge level of 0.4m, then dropping to 0.2m, possibly in response to the accident. This compares with 0.7m the previous day. He and a colleague were reported to have been in a double although there are conflicting reports as to whether it was a canoe or a kayak. At this stage details are sketchy but this is one of the classic routes across Scotland, from the Black Mount to the Tummel.

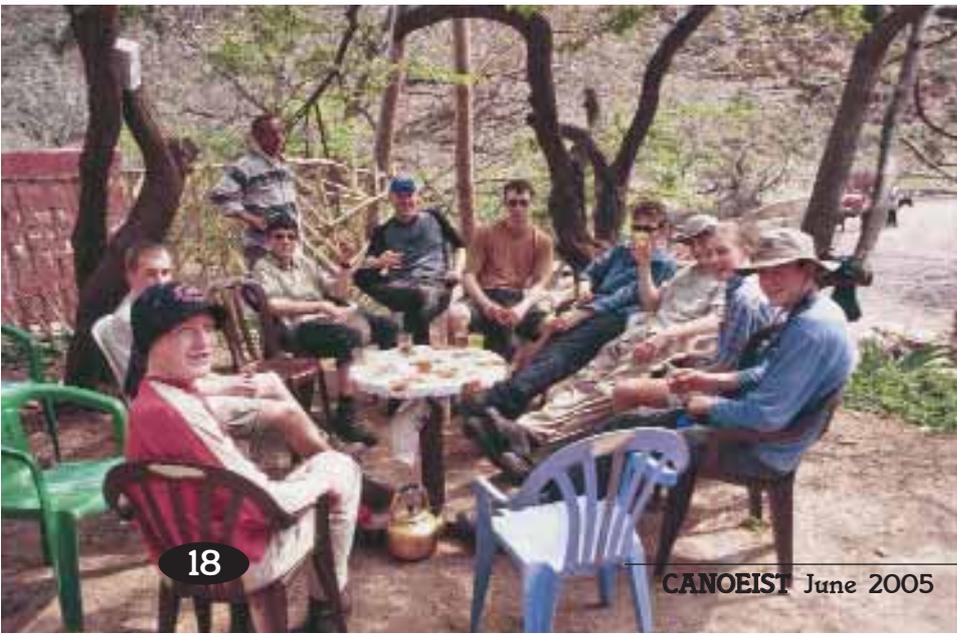




Exploring the Atlas Mountains

In April 2004 nine Explorer Scouts and four leaders from Ripon in North Yorkshire completed a two week trek and kayak expedition in Morocco. They raised over £11,600 towards expedition costs and trained hard to acquire the skills needed to paddle the Hidden River in the Middle Atlas Mountains.

Drinking mint tea under the juniper trees.



At 2am on Christmas Day 2003 all had gone to bed except Hamish and myself. We were steadily emptying bottles of red wine as I listened to Hamish's tales of rafting trips around the world. I had organized various expeditions over the years and Hamish had just given me my next venture. I had wanted to take my Scouts on an expedition that would challenge them physically and mentally. A rafting trip would be OK but not really what I was after. I wanted more than sitting on a raft and paddling when told. I wanted more of a challenge, a challenge where each person was responsible for his own actions, something requiring specific skills and training, a chance to experience different cultures, living and surviving in a wilderness and certainly not a holiday. Hamish runs a global rafting and kayaking business and suggested Morocco as an ideal location for a youth group to kayak grade 2 rivers so I booked for Easter school holidays, April 2004, when the water in Morocco was ideal for kayaking. This gave us just over a year to train and raise some money.

The expedition team consisted of nine Explorer Scouts (aged 15 to 17 years) and 4 leaders from Ripon in North Yorkshire. I was already a Level 2 coach so was able to do much of the kayak training myself. After a lot of time and effort from many people the Explorers gained the required kayaking skills, BCU 3 Star as a minimum and the Canoe Safety Test with most paddling grade 2 water before they went. They also did the Junior Lifesaver Plus first aid course. This training also counted towards their Duke of Edinburgh Awards. They already had good walking and camping skills as part of normal Scout training. After raising £11,600 towards the trip, April 2004 soon came round.

We flew into Marrakech and booked into the Hotel Imouzzar after an uneventful 14 hour journey.



*Camping at 2,000m.
A well deserved rest during the hike.*



The Imouzzer was a low budget, basic, £3 a night job, clean, safe, secure and ideal for our needs. Hamish normally puts his clients in hotels at \$40 a night but I had wanted cheap and simple, something with an expedition feel and this hotel was ideal. It was also where Hamish and his river guides stayed.

After about 4 hours sleep we were woken at 5am with the call to prayer from the numerous loudspeakers on the Youssef Mosque. After a petit déjeuner on the hotel roof we had a short walk to our pickup point for the first part of our expedition, five days trekking in the High Atlas Mountains.

Mohamed and Mohamed

The first Mohamed was in charge of the minibus company. He met us and took his final payment. After an hour and a half we arrived in a small village in the foothills surrounded by snowcapped peaks of the High Atlas Mountains. The next Mohamed was in charge of the trekking company. He gave a warm welcome and offered us mint tea under the juniper trees. We had been told about their hospitality to strangers. We had expected to carry full packs; however, when the offer came to load our kit onto mules there was no hesitation in emptying our packs, poor mules! After an hour or so we started our four day trek through the High Atlas Mountains with another Mohamed, our trek leader (Are you starting to get the picture with names? They all seemed to be called Mohamed!)

During the next 4 days we trekked in some of the most stunning scenery you can imagine. Bright red sandstone rock exploding from lush green fields, deep blue skies and snow capped mountain peaks constantly attacked our visual senses. Mohamed spoke reasonable English as well as Berber, Arabic and French and was able to talk about his county as the Explorers listened with interest, how his people, the Berbers, were about 35% of the population and predominantly lived in the mountains while the remaining 65% were Arabs and city dwellers. He also mentioned that many mountain people were exempt from paying taxes but received none of the social benefits but now the younger generation wanted some of the trappings of city dwellers, so attracting the eye of the taxman. No doubt this will erode the independence of the Berbers.

The first night of our trek was in basic gîte d'étape (lodge) accommodation with mattresses of the floor, cold water for washing and basic toilet (hole in the floor). The toilet soon became blocked; someone had put toilet paper down the hole so the guides gave one of the Explorers a stick to poke down the hole to unblock it, not what they were expecting. The second night was spent in tents in a 2,000m mountain pass. Here the toilet was behind whatever large rock we could find and washing was done in the small stream. The third night was spent in another gîte d'étape but this one had a hamman (the Moroccan equivalent of a Turkish bath). That evening our guides entertained us with traditional Berber songs using improvised instruments from the kitchen, pots and pans, before the people upstairs complained about the noise! It was wonderful seeing the Explorers losing their inhibitions by joining hands and singing along with the Berbers.

High altitude fight

Our Berber guides and muleteers did all the cooking and putting up tents. The food they provided was traditional Moroccan, predominantly fresh fruit and vegetables with small quantities of meat, all of which was quickly devoured by 9 hungry teenagers. Being a Muslim country, our guide and muleteers would occasional stop and pray to Mecca. During the trek we passed through a few mountain villages. The people were shy but friendly, always returning a wave with a friendly 'Bonjour.' However, they didn't like having their photos taken.

The Berber people live a simple lifestyle. Sun scorched red brown terraced villages hugged steep mountain slopes in defensive huddles, a reflection of a violent past where the need was to repel attackers. Nowadays the attacker is the 21st century. Many villages were just getting electricity as intrusive shiny new pylons crossed the valleys like motorways.

At the highest part of the trek (2,500m) the Explorers found a small

patch of snow and had a snowball fight but when we rounded the next corner our muleteers had found a bigger patch and gave the Explorers a good beating.

The trek finished in the village of Imil under the shadow of Mt Toubkal (4,167m), the highest mountain in north Africa. Our guides and muleteers had been excellent and knew how to deal with young people, which helped make the trekking phase a great start to the expedition.

Where the guides happened to be

We arrived back in Marrakech late afternoon on 7th April, checked back into our hotel, dumped our rucksacks and went straight out to the Hotel Tazi, one of only two places in Marrakech which sold beer but this was not our main reason for going. We were meeting Hamish and our river guides and they happened to be where the beer was! Our next adventure was about to begin.

Hamish is a New Zealander who hates banana hammocks (Speedos wearers) and people who wear socks with their sandals. Hamish tried to brief everyone about the kayaking but the Explorers were much more interested in camel racing on the TV in the bar.

We were up early the following morning with the 5am call to prayer. Hamish and our river guides (Clive, deputy river guide from England, Brett from New Zealand and Koki from Switzerland) took us to the food markets in Marrakech. The meat was fresh, particularly chicken and rabbit. The Explorers were fascinated to see our chickens bought alive then passed to the shop next door where they were beheaded and put through the defeather machine! Having completed the shopping in the morning we had free time to explore Marrakech and the souks before helping pack the Land Rovers and trailer later that afternoon.

The loo with a view

With an early start the following morning (our 5am call was becoming useful) we set off in two hired Land Rovers and Morris (Hamish's Land Rover) plus trailer. It took 6 hours, much of it driving through heavy rain, to reach the Hidden River in the Middle Atlas Mountains which were shrouded in low cloud. Our first sighting of the river was a narrow gorge with fast moving, muddy coloured water. Hearts started beating faster and most started to have second thoughts. Another hour on the 'road' (requiring 4 x 4 vehicles) and we arrived at our first night's camping area. After unloading, Hamish explained the camp setup. All water (collected from the river) was to be filtered and iodine added; hands must be washed with antiseptic soap before eating or handling food and after going to the toilet. Hygiene was paramount. The toilet was placed well away from the camp area and always with a spectacular view when seated! Hamish stressed people must not pee in the toilet but only use it for crapping. All human waste would be kept in the toilet and taken back to Marrakech along with all other rubbish at the end of the trip.

The camp setup was very efficient. The Explorers helped prepare food, cook and wash up. Cooking was done on gas and open fires. The meals ranged from spaghetti bolognaise, pizza and chips and tortillas to apple crumble and stir fry. We slept in tents and lived in two sets of clothes for five days, one set for kayaking and the other for the evening. We each had about 25l of space in a drybag to pack all personal kit, including sleeping bag. All equipment went on a raft paddled by Hamish.

The river was wide and flowing swiftly. We would be paddling predominantly alpine grade 2 and 2+ with sections of grade 1 and 3 in between. We paddled in groups of 4 each with a river guide. Probably for the first time in their lives, Explorers (and leaders) were truly pushed physically and mentally to their maximum and taken outside their comfort zone. Kayaking skills were tested to the full with many of them taking swims during the first few hours. Several started rolling in moving water for the first time. Towards the end of the first day we suddenly found ourselves paddling through the narrow gorge seen the day before. Once everybody had got through without swimming they realized it wasn't as hard as they anticipated. Not long after that we were at the second night's camp. At this point it was possible to drive Morris to the opposite bank. However, after this, we would be



*Making pizza on the kitchen table.
Hamish rows the gear boat.*

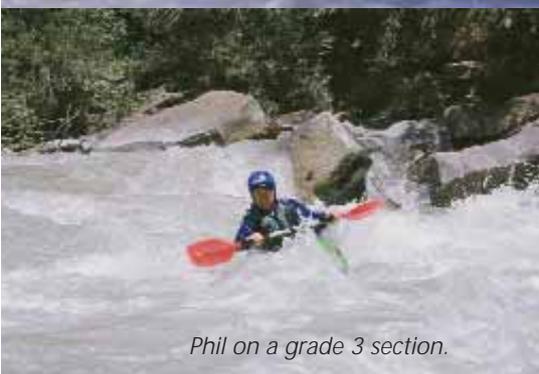




Kev takes a swim.



The ducky paddlers.



Phil on a grade 3 section.



One of the smaller rapids.



A group on a rapid.



Bryne gets some downtime..

committed to running the river as vehicular access would not be possible. Two of the leaders decided their kayaking skills were somewhat lacking so Hamish put them in a ducky (an inflatable raft for two). Hamish and his guides were happy with everybody else's paddling skills and so allowed them to continue in kayaks. This was the point of no return and Hamish reserved the right to either cancel the trip or put more people in duckyies.

The rock hugging ducky paddlers

During the next four days we paddled the Hidden River under the guidance of Clive, Brett and Koki. Their manner, approach and technical skills soon gave the team confidence in their own ability and ensured nobody came to any real harm. At grade 3 sections most people portaged but the better paddlers were allowed to run them. At a couple of points we all had to portage because of dangerous undercutts. We paddled past disused kasbahs, large communal tower like houses which were usually fortified. Occasionally we saw locals looking down from the high cliffs or by the river tending their crops or watching their goats. During day three we practised white water rescue techniques and rescued Clive from a rock in the middle of a grade 3 rapid. Overall there were no major problems. Several people took swims and ended up with a few cuts and bruises. The ducky paddlers couldn't decide between themselves which side to pass a rock and so found themselves hugging a rock in the middle of the river. One leader was seen darting in and out of bushes with an ever diminishing roll of loo paper (and a box of matches) and another leader needed pain killers for bruised kidneys but, other than that, everybody stayed in very good health. Hamish carries a very comprehensive medical chest and, for more serious injuries, a satellite phone.

By mid morning on day five the water became much more mellow. We paddled through narrow gorges with towering red rock some 300 feet high. By lunchtime we arrived at the reservoir. The last 4 hours was spent paddling 5km against a headwind to reach Morris, prepositioned on the far side. This was by far the hardest part of the trip. We were hoping for a motorboat tow but this had not turned up. To make the paddle even harder, the equipment raft had sustained a puncture in a front section earlier that day so we pushed the ducky under the front bow. This meant a very hard, slow paddle for Hamish and other volunteers. However, by 4pm we had all completed the Hidden River trip. We were the first youth group to kayak the river. Credit has to go to the young people and leaders who took part in this expedition as they proved that they could push themselves beyond their own



One the 60m gorges to paddle.



A rest towards the end of the gorge.

Pleasant small rapids through the mountains.



expectations. They had made a commitment the previous year and saw it through to the end.

We arrived in Marrakech later that evening and booked back into the Hotel Imouzzar. The following day we hired a minibus to Essaouira, a coastal resort, for the last two days, a beautiful resort that provided an ideal way to finish off what had proved to be a highly successful expedition. On Saturday 17th April (day of departure), our prebooked minibus was waiting for us at 4am to take us to the airport and the 14 hour journey back to Ripon.

The adventure continues

Most of you will think that this is the end of an expedition. However, a year has now passed and it still affects people's lives. Those who went in 2004 have matured noticeably and are more confident. Many are now young leaders in various Scout groups in the district. Several have taken up kayaking as their main sport and now paddle grade 4 rivers. Two are training to become Level 2 BCU Coaches. I have become a Level 3 Coach. Like all expeditions of this nature, it will be many years before the true benefits are really seen or appreciated. I personally benefited from doing expeditions. I am the product of an Operation Raleigh expedition which gave me the confidence and skills to help develop young people today. I am now organizing another expedition to Morocco in April 2006 for 11 Explorers. This expedition will be a continuous 11 days of true wilderness travel, 6 days trekking to the put in point and then 5 days kayaking to the reservoir.

Philip Oakley is the Ripon Explorer Scout Leader

For further information about organising a similar expedition or to other worldwide destinations with Hamish and his crew contact him at www.waterbynature.com. Hamish's dedication and commitment to making this expedition happen were second to none. Without his help the expedition would not have been the success it was.



Paddling out towards the reservoir.



The group at the end of the paddle.



On a flatter section of river.

Rockley residential

Rockley Watersports are moving into residential holidays for 11 - 16 year olds, taking up to 40 to their Rive freshwater lake in SW France. The children are undertaking a choice of two multiactivity courses, canoeing included. [0870 777 0541]

Sports beach holidays

Club Pavilion have added Club Losinj in Croatia to Club Poros in Greece for their affordable active beach holidays. Free kayaks are available, together with windsurfing, dinghy sailing, snorkelling, quad bikes, tennis and more from £599 for 14 nights in August. [0870 241 0427]

Want to follow the sun?

Do you fancy a change of lifestyle? Florida Bay Outfitters Inc is for sale if you are finding global warming to be falling short of what you were promised. [00 1 305 394 8049]



Let your fingers do the paddling

PlayStation 2 are releasing Wild Water Adrenaline, a white water freestyle kayak and rafting game for up to 4 players. Now you can go paddling without having to get off your couch.

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What's new Eureka



Fancy the wet T shirt look without the discomfort?

Rockfort's spring/summer range offers wet T shirts at £30 in addition to other shirts, jackets and shoes.



West System have introduced a minipack at £9.99.

It contains 250g of resin, 50g of hardener, microfibrines, low density filler, cups, gloves, mixing sticks, syringes and an instruction leaflet. [01794 521111]

American merger confirmed

In our March issue (p22) we reported on a merger between Confluence and Watermark, bringing an immediate reaction from Confluence, who wanted to see what we had put and they would then decide what steps to take next. Having read it, there was no further reaction. An American magazine contacted us for information, unable to elicit a response themselves. On May 12th Confluence broke their silence and advised their dealers that they had acquired Watermark, adding Dagger, Perception, Mainstream, A T Paddles and Harmony to Wave Sport, Wilderness Systems, Mad River, Windrider and Voyageur but not Yakima. The corporate structure under Richard Feehan was expected to include Kelley Woolsey and Bob McDonough on the Confluence side and Brian Fisch, Ron Barlow and Tony Lee on the Watermark side plus David D'Auteuil. Whatever happened to Joe Pulliam? If you thought that Huw Evans of White Water Consultancy International was having difficulty containing his excitement during the canoe exhibition you now know the reason. That is a lot of product lines.



Bryant Homes are building new houses as Rope Quays for those wanting waterside accommodation in Gosport. One and two bedroom apartments cost £139,000 to 240,000 with three bedroom equivalents to follow. [0800 731 3120]

Whispering the level

Pegler Electronics have developed a river water levels gauge. They have a test device on the Leny which is updating a web site (follow the River Leny links from www.waterwhisperer.co.uk) with river level information automatically. The Waterwhisperer can also be accessed via phone by dialling 0789 1982 186. It will then simply talk back the current level with some history data as well. Stephen Pegler, the developer, now has a WAP page. Enter www.pegtronics.com/leny as a bookmark into your WAP phone. It shows river level every hour on the hour for 12 hours. It's Stephen's first attempt at creating a WAP page so please let him know if it works or not. It's proving a brilliant device. Do you want one for your favourite spot? The cost depends on the site but think in terms of around a thousand pounds or so to set up.

Nepal holidays

Adventure-Whitewater still have some places left for their trip in Nepal from 17th Oct to 2nd Nov on the Bhote Kosi and Seti. It is billed as being for flat water kayak paddlers wanting a new challenge, intermediates seeking to improve or experts wanting a relaxing holiday. It will also offer opportunities for rafting, canyoning, bungee jumping, trekking and more. The price is £850 plus an estimated £755 from London. A Chitwan wildlife safari can be added at the end for those with an extra 4 days and £250 to spare. [0870 443 0240]



Katy Turner

Ryders claim their Jolt sunglasses are well suited for watersports. They have Durelex frames of Grilamid Nylon which bend without cracking, hydrophilic anti slip rubber pads on ear and nose bridge, UVA and UVB protection and polarization to reflect glare. They cost £39.99.



Denzil Lee

Canada's Sundog Eyewear is now being targeted at the British watersports market. An early move has been to sponsor staff at the UK Sailing Academy.

The delightfully named Yak Vapor is a summer touring cagoule in soft, durable, breathable, taped seam fabric with all ends in neoprene. It has an offset pocket, usable when wearing a buoyancy aid, even if the reflective tape isn't. There is a single colour scheme and four sizes. Cost is £79.95.

The Horizon deck is in neoprene with a Nylon body tube and detachable adjustable braces, allowing it also to be used with a twin seal top. There is a pocket on the front of the tube and useful chart elastics on the front of the deck. It costs £49.95. [023 9252 8621]

Valley sponsor Sean Morley

Sean Morley is now sponsored by Valley Sea Kayaks and he hopes to be involved in the development of future designs, taking them into new areas.

Chile and Patagonia by sea kayak

Yak Expediciones run trips on the Pacific Ocean to a group of islands that are part of the Humboldt penguin reserve. Around these islands, located on the frontier with the Atacama region, live a whole colony of penguins, bottlenosed dolphins and sealions. The trips feature silence, sunsets, clouds, outstanding landscapes, hanging woods, huge waterfalls falling directly into the ocean, cliffs that disappear in the waves, natural hot springs and local people. They organize trips on the clear waters close to Santiago and in Valparaiso, in the Cruces River Natural Sanctuary in Valdivia and the Conguillio National Park Lake District, in the Patagonia region, navigating the northern Patagonia fjords and Pumalin Park, on the Futaleufú and Palena River and longer explorations to the San Rafael and Pio XI glacier and between the icefields, amongst others. Courses and trips are for beginners, families, intermediates and advanced paddlers, from 1 to 17 days. [00 56 2 227 0427]



The Pentax OptioWP is a 5 megapixel digital camera with 10.5MB of memory. It measures 100 x 51 x 22mm and has a 3X optical zoom. It is waterproof to 1.5m, has a low reflection 50mm LCD screen, is ready for use in 0.6 sec and has a recovery function for erased images. It costs £229.99.

Yorkshire Water's bottled water goes under the name Icytonic. Does 'Energy on tap' mean that their water contains energy?



Frances Everest photographs



The first double Channel crossing



Jo Ledger

Jo (left) poses with the group on the beach in France before setting off back home.

Jo Ledger says she has not gone any further than Scotland. With a grin and a twinkling eye, perhaps this smokescreen is technically correct, having not canoed abroad, but it modestly attempts to hide a wealth of touring experience within this country.

When the war came she was too young to join up at first so she worked on a farm as a Land Girl. She joined the ATS when she was old enough and learned to drive on canvas sided ambulances. Driving remains very important to her. She left the forces in 1946.

Her family had owned a rowing boat since 1940, used around the Penton Hook area, parting company with it in 1957, by which time the leaks were hard to disguise.

They joined the Camping Club and were camping at the club's site in Chertsey in 1960 when they ran into the Canoe-Camping Club, Jo having been a stalwart of their Thames Region ever since. Frank Stevenson was the runs

leader at the time. Jo used a wooden Kayel and her balance was good because of the rowing. The list of her paddling friends is a *Who's Who* of post war canoeing, amongst whom were Janet Hales, David Hirschfeld of Tyne Canoes and Kevin East, barely out of his teens. Her late husband, Ted, never paddled, not being a swimmer, but he always encouraged her. She liked to be in a group, which usually included somebody expert on the weather.

The nearest she got to overseas paddling was Channel crossings on no less than five occasions, two of them doubles. The first was led by John McCann in 1971 and was the first double crossing, as entered in the *Guinness Book of Records*. They set off back at 4pm and arrived at midnight, having run into phosphorescence which really put the icing on the cake to make it a truly memorable experience. Seven had paddled over and Jo was one of the four to make the return trip, the rest coming back on the escort boat. Five years later she was in the group who made the fastest return trip. A visit to the coastguard at St Margaret's suggested that a strip of foil on the deck was enough for them to be picked up by radar.

Jo was thrilled to bits on hearing about Ian Tordoff's record breaking crossing (p30) and hopes this will open things up so that others can begin crossing again.

The next development was completing the Devizes to Westminster Race three times between 1978 and 1983. She thought the Bruce Tunnel horrible and was frightened of meeting a boat coming the other way. Their times were not particularly fast but a contributory factor may have been the race diet of fairly potent home brewed wine. She still produces it but now gives it away.

One year her time in the Westel Time Trial on the Basingstoke Canal was notably better than usual. It was the year she did not stop with her friends for a pie and a pint.

Fortnight summer tours took her everywhere, the Inner Hebrides including around Skye, Coll, Tiree and around Cape Wrath including having a killer whale under the boat and being driven out of a cave by the smell of shags. She used to have fresh mustard and cress which she grew in the warmth of the cockpit during the trip and she remembers baking bread in the far northwest although she cannot recall how. Off Jura they met a party of Danes in a replica Norse



Jo in her sea kayak at Appleford during the Millenium Thames Tour.



Bob and Jo in her 80th birthday present.

longboat to celebrate a 900th anniversary of a less appreciated earlier arrival. Inland, she went through the Caledonian Canal and around Loch Lomond. Welsh canals included the Llangollen Branch and the Monmouthshire & Brecon. She went round Sheppey, did the return trip from Hartland Quay to Lundy in a weekend and paddled off the Isle of Man. The Severn Bore was run several times. Few people these days can match her wealth of paddling experience, of which these runs are just a selection.

She rarely misses organized runs, taking part in them about every fortnight these days, typically 10km in winter and over 20km in summer although she managed 30km one day at this year's Easter meet at Stratford, a lovely event except for being attacked by a swan. Recently it was the Mole and the Dart estuary. Next she is looking forward to the Adur and the Cuckmere. What an example to paddlers of any age, let alone people who say they are too old for canoeing.

Letters

The Feminine Article Competition and beyond

From **Linda Fitter**.

I just wanted to write a letter of thanks to you!

Many years ago, I think I was age 45 at the time, you inspired me to write for the Feminine Article Competition. My *Seven Sisters and Me* was awarded a choice from your book list as a prize and I selected *The Hidden Coast* by Joel Rogers. As a beginner to sea kayaking I had really only been getting into it for fear of never otherwise seeing my husband, Mick!

But now my interest in Mick's *Canoeist* magazines increased and this book of kayak explorations from Alaska to Mexico opened my eyes to an environment I never really knew existed, especially from the pictures of the Queen Charlotte Islands and Johnson Strait.

Over the next few years I acquired my own new gear, rather than Mick's cast offs, and my own boat and went to a few sea symposia. A talk and slide show about Newfoundland at Cwm Pennant in 1998 encouraged us to book up on a commercial expedition amongst the icebergs in Notre Dame Bay. Following that mind blowing experience we both took early retirement and went on to paddle in New Zealand, Croatia, Sweden's North Sea archipelagos, the Baltic and, yes, British Columbia's Johnson Strait and the Queen Charlotte Islands. Wow!

I'm not a highly proficient paddler and always a bit on the slow side but, with Mick's support and his 5 Star training skills, I've been able to achieve what I would have thought to be the impossible. The experiences have been just fantastic, not just the paddling itself but the true wilderness expedition camping opportunities and the people we have been privileged to have met.

Writing up my accounts of the trips gave a purpose to learn to use the computer and a great sense of pride that I have had them all published in

various canoe magazines. We were even sponsored by P&H with their new Quest Sea Kayak in 2001. I like to think that maybe I have inspired other women to go beyond what they might have felt possible with their sea kayaking.

Sadly I have recently developed dystonia, a rare neurological movement disorder, so it is doubtful I will be able to kayak on the sea in the future unless a calm, flat surface is guaranteed! A huge disappointment but to have achieved what Mick and I have done together, we can look back with wonderful memories and no regrets at lost opportunities. However, even at age 61 I'm an optimist and adaptable so the past two Septembers we have taken to the glorious waters of the Lake District in our expedition Quests! The daily sandwiches rattled around a bit in all that space but the skegs proved their worth as winds rolling down from the mountains hit.

We must express our disappointment at *Canoeist* as a paper magazine being changed to the web. We use the computer as a tool but never for relaxation. With my dystonia it is impossible to relax at the computer! Being transported to magical places has to be in comfort when you need to dream. So Mick's subscription ceased at the beginning of the year. It's something I miss.

Again, thank you for that competition. I wonder if it enhanced anyone else's life?

X factor holidays

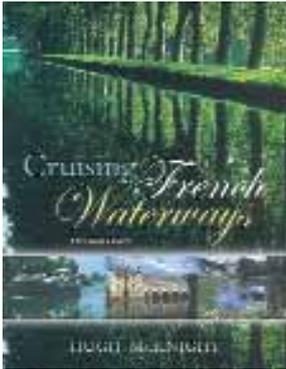
From **Colin Phillips, Kendal, Cumbria**.

I have recently spent an amazingly wonderful week paddling around the Lake District. Why was this holiday so different from the many others I have undertaken? Because I was partnered by a visually impaired canoeist. Not only did our group have a great time paddling but I have now met a group of people who are absolutely fantastic company, great canoeists and enjoy life to the full. This holiday was organized by the charity Vitalise and I was saddened to hear, while I was with them, that they struggle to get sighted people to go on their holidays. I am now ready for a my next trip with them, down the Spey in September, and I would recommend all other canoeists who want a holiday with the X factor to try a Vitalise holiday. Their number is 01539 735080, www.vitalise.org.uk.

BOOKS

Reviews of new books and publications

Cruising French Waterways



*Hugh McKnight
Adlard Coles Nautical, 37 Soho Sq,
London W1D 3QZ
0 7136 6638 2
1984, 4th edition May 2005
240 x 190mm
296 pages, paperback
£25.00*

In the twelve years since we looked at this book (Aug 93, p26) it has lost its hard cover but the price has also dropped £5. There are a number of new waterways included, the Cher, the Canal de Berry, the Baise, the lower Lot and the Nouvelle Branch of

the Canal du Midi.

In places there seems to have been tinkering with the phraseology for the sake of it but much of the content of the text remains unchanged. On the whole, the black and white pictures are a touch less sharp but the maps are rather better.

The dated picture of slalomists in Strasbourg has gone, as has reference to Philip Hamerton's 19th century exploration of a tributary of the Loire by paper canoe but there are a number of other references to canoeing, including the new canoe course at Temple-sur-Lot. Restoration work continues although shops and restaurants come and go, mostly a decline in rural areas.

Plans to restore 20km of the Canal de Nantes à Brest from Pontivy to the Guerlédam dam, currently available to canoeists but not larger craft, are expected to come to fruition despite the objections of anglers. The book recalls how boaters had to assert their navigation rights on British canals in the 1950s. Many of the French tunnels are lit, potentially avoiding a problem of being seen which affects British tunnels.

There are other rules which do not affect us directly but indicate a bureaucratic state of mind, such as boaters in France being able to use red diesel for heating their boats but not for propulsion or the requirement of someone who has taken his boat across the Channel to take an exam of competence while a novice who arrives by car to hire a boat does not have to do so as that would hit the French tourism industry. There is one final vote of confidence from the author, however. He has bought a property by the Lot, where he now lives, finding it rather more amenable than Shepperton.

Still to come

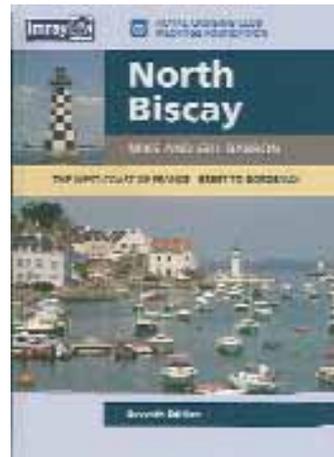
Reviews take time and are an ongoing process. As we draw to a close we still have some titles in the process of being reviewed.

To be fair to the publishers we shall complete the reviews and they will appear on our website,
www.canoeist.co.uk,
in due course.



North Biscay

*Mike & Gill Barron
0 85288 702 7
1959. 7th edition 2005
265 pages, hardback
£35.00*



*Anne Hammick
Imray Laurie Norie & Wilson
Ltd, Wych House, The
Broadway, St Ives, Cambs PE27
5BT
0 85288 761 2
1989. 4th edition Sep 20054
A4
328 pages, hardback
£37.50*

These guides are aimed at yachtsmen, concentrating on moorings and how to reach them without hitting anything solid. As such, they avoid the features most likely to be of interest to the sea paddler and the rock strewn sections of coast between the harbours. In particular, the one to the French coast from Brest to Bordeaux has less attention to features ashore than for the *Adriatic Pilot* (May, p35) with limited advice on water taps, shops and restaurants although there are suggestions of where to go for walks.

There are many chartlets and also tidal flow charts. There are also numerous colour photographs, including aerial pictures which are helpful for giving a general view of the area and information not spelled out in the text. This is an area which has much in common with the

Cornish coast but with such additional features as the Gulf of Morbihan. It deserves much more attention than it gets from British paddlers.

Featured in the *Atlantic Islands* volume are the Azores, Madeira, Canary and Cape Verde islands, rarely visited by paddlers despite their relative nearness, warm climate, interesting scenery and potential for whale watching amongst volcanic peaks.

The pictures are smaller than in the Biscay volume but there is much more useful descriptive text. Included are the wind acceleration zones around the Canary Islands. There are many chartlets. However, it is astonishing that some charts used even by commercial shipping are based on surveys done as long ago as the 19th century and that the positions of some islands are not known accurately to this day. 'Not only should the lights not be relied upon, but it appears likely that the charted positions of one or both the groups may well be inaccurate to some degree... Accurate WGS84 positions of any of the anchorages or other charted features would be much appreciated'.

The author's interest is larger yachts, the rest of us being lumped together as 'smallcraft', but there is plenty of information for anyone thinking of using lesser boats, not least the attitudes of the residents and officials to visitors and boats.

For both books updates will appear on the publisher's website.

Lancaster Canal with the Ribble Link

0 86351 174 0

2005

800 x 420mm folding to 210 x 140mm

£4.95

Caledonian Canal & the Greta Glen

0 86351 175 9

1997. 2nd edition 2005

430mm x 1.07m folding to 210 x 140mm

£4.95

Basingstoke Canal & the River Wey Navigations

0 86351 176 7

1995. 3rd edition 2005.

430mm x 1.24m folding to 210 x 130mm

£4.50

Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal with the River Severn & the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal

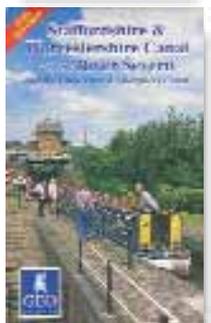
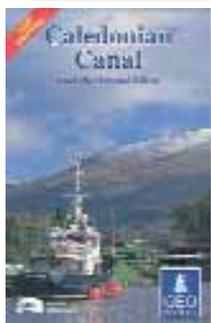
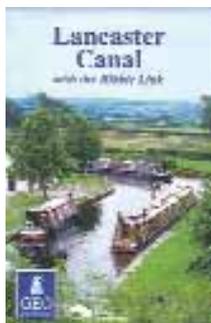
Geoprojects (UK) Ltd, 8 Southern Court, South Street, Reading RG1 4QS

0 86351 177 5

1999. 2nd edition 2005

1.17m x 430mm folding to 210 x 130mm

£4.95



Four new canal maps are right up to Geoprojects usual high mapping standard.

The Lancaster Canal sheet not only includes the northern end from Kendal and the Glasson Branch and the Ribble Link but also the River Douglas from as far south as Tarleton and the Ribble from the M6. Canal only usable by portable craft is indicated as such. It is scaled at 1:60,000.

The Caledonian Canal sheet is not just for boaters, giving notes and routes for walkers and mountain bikers. The imperial to metric conversions could have been done better and the implication that the Highland Clearances were caused by economic migrants will cause some irritation. However the relevant information for this most popular trans Scotland paddle is all pulled together on a single 1:50,000 sheet.

The change of name on the Basingstoke Canal sheet (Dec 95, p18) indicates that addition coverage is now given to the deep water navigation from Godalming to Pyrford. The scale has been reduced to 1:60,000, this being the only single sided map of these four. It is all together in one place, including town plans of Godalming and Guildford. Text changes are limited but attention is now drawn to the Basingstoke Canal Canoe Club's location.

The extent of the remaining map is astonishing, all the way from Weston on the Trent & Mersey Canal via the Staffordshire & Worcestershire to Sharpness, the latter approached by both the River Severn and the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal, again at 1:60,000.

There are some colour photographs and each sheet manages to present all the required information without cluttering the map.

Scottish Canoe Touring

Eddie Palmer

Pesda Press Ltd, Elidir, Ffordd Llanllechid, Rachub, Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 3EE

0 9547061 3 7

2005

200 x 140mm

248 pages, paperback



Our river guide books usually seem to begin by picking out only the rough sections, then adding shorter, more remote and more extreme sections in subsequent editions. This new Scottish guide is a welcome change,

covering river sections up to grade 3, canals and inland and sea lochs for the touring paddler.

We also seem to think that long kayaks are for the sea, short ones for white water rivers and open canoes for anything left, largely supported in this book as most of the two dozen pages of coloured pictures feature open canoes. The author also makes occasional reference to his particular interest of canoe sailing where appropriate.

Input comes from a number of contributors, listed together at the front rather than with their inputs as guides are often compiled from the suggestions of more than one person, a pity if you like to know whose advice you are taking.

The format is in two colours and like *Scottish White Water* although the icons do not give the preferred water levels. There are distances, OS maps, grades, introductions, physical access points, campsites and accommodation in addition to the descriptions, the latter relatively brief but often with route distances indicated. Location maps come at the start of each section and cover flaps are useful as page markers. If you buy from the SCA the profits will go into the Andy Jackson Fund for Access, this book being right up to date with the latest access legislation developments.

At the end, after 128 rivers or long sections of river, there are 11 routes across Scotland to test the macho paddler/portager and questions about other possible portage routes to make Scotland like a mountain answer of the Canadian backwoods.

There are one or two surprises. The river which I understood to change its name's pronunciation along its length from Avon through Arvon to Arn is 'pronounced "Ayon"', apparently.

From Corgarff Bridge the River Don 'has been paddled in high water.' I can't remember whether I launched at Cock Bridge, the next one up, for our Nov 86 guide but my pictures show only average water conditions.

'The Tay has the fastest tides of any estuary in the UK. There is absolutely no chance of paddling against it'. I paddled the Tay estuary the wrong way both ways to research our Feb 01 guide after making a hash of the tidal calculations, slowly and mostly close to the north shore but I got there and back, repenting at leisure.

On the Ayr at Catrine it says 'Double weirs (grade 4). Portage.' The first one may get up to grade 4 but the second is a simple high drop into a pool surrounded by tall concrete walls which lead off into the distance, perhaps a 1E on Terry Storry's system (but still a portage). Weirs are often hard to grade.

Anyway, I'm splitting hairs on an excellent book. I shall be very interested to see how sales of this book compare with the white water one. Suffice it to say that as soon as I have finished writing this all the maps are coming out for some indulgent study with Eddie's book.

Scotland's Far West

Denis Brook & Phil Hinchliffe

Cicerone, 2 Police Sq, Milnthorpe, Cumbria LA7 7PY

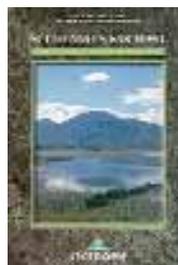
1 85284 407 8

Apr 2005

170 x 120mm

190 pages, paperback

£10.00



The scope of this walking guide is Mull plus Ulva and Iona and the Arnamurchan peninsula including Ardgour, Sunart and the Morvern.

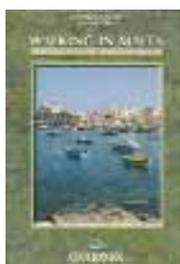
Many of the walks relate to the coast or lochs and there are descriptions of the sights and features of interest plus the occasional

folk tale. Now and again the walks are to sights which are very much more easily approached by boat, such as MacCulloch's fossil tree on Mull. If you can stand on a mountain and admire a loch it is equally appropriate to sit on the loch and admire the mountain, both being described.

Illustration is by frequent colour pictures and sections of 1:50,000 OS map.

'One final - and useful - point in this section. All road bridges crossing streams or rivers in Ardnamurchan carry signs with the name of the river on one side and the national grid reference number of their location on the reverse.' If you lose your bearings you can get out at the next road bridge to obtain your exact location. What an excellent idea.

Walking in Malta



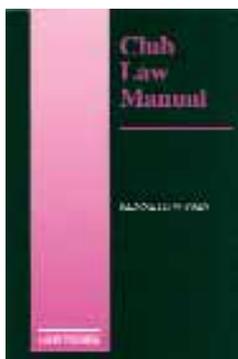
Paddy Dillon
Cicerone
1 85284 422 1
Nov 2004
170 x 120mm
220 pages, paperback
£12.00

The islands of Malta are noted for their cliffs. Much of this book is about seeing them from the top, occasionally noting the inaccessibility for those on foot, 'the cliff edges are often fractured and huge detached boulders form a wild and jumbled "undercliff" where few walkers venture. Among the boulders are sheltered sun-traps'.

'A cruise trip around the islands is a fine way to explore the cliff coast' says the author, who has written many walking guides. Illustration is by use of the local 1:25,000 mapping and colour photographs.

The islands are steeped in thousands of years of history at the centre of the Mediterranean, there are fine limestone cliff features, the sun is warm, the water clear and, if the pictures are any guide, the smaller the island, the more attraction there is for the sea paddler.

Club Law Manual



Kenneth W Pain
Callow Publishing, 4 Shillingford St,
Islington, London N1 2DP
1 898899 78 9
11th Apr 2005
230 x 160mm
178 pages, paperback
£27.50

In some ways it is a shame that the book is true to its title. It would take little more to make it a general treatise on how to run a club.

Much of the content relates to issues concerned with members' clubhouses, the supply of alcohol and the 2003 licensing legislation. This comes down even to such matters as the supply of liqueur chocolates to children. On the other hand there is nothing on coaching beyond supervision of children in clubhouses by coaches and details of employment of staff which could well include coaches. There is advice on officials required for a club, how to run meetings and disciplinary issues. Matters to be covered by club rules are suggested but there are no sample clauses, probably of more value than the sample application forms for licensing included in the book. There are checklists for some topics and reference to relevant court cases, not too accessible for the average club member, who would probably appreciate a paragraph on each to give a summary of the issues and outcome.

The canoe club with a bar will gain more from the book than the small club without one but it still acts as a useful pointer to issues which might be overlooked when setting up a club.



The Channel record falls

The 30 year old record for crossing the English Channel in a single handed kayak was well and truly broken by me on Wednesday 18th May 2005.

I managed to shave an incredible 11 minutes from the old record of 3 hours and 33 minutes which had stood since 1976. The new record time is 3 hours 21 minutes and 54 seconds from Folkestone beach to Wisant beach in France.

I was naturally thrilled with my marathon feat. To beat the old record has been an ambition of mine for many years. Having competed at world level at wild water, marathon and sprint kayaking since the age of 16 years there are not many challenges left for me in the kayak world.

I felt good from the start at 05:56 hours at Folkestone; it was not till the last hour that fatigue really made it start to hurt. The weather was good with just a force 2 blowing and we tried to time the attempt around the high tide. What did surprise me was the strength of current which meant, despite steering a straight course, we ended up covering over 40 kilometres for the 35 kilometre route.



My attempt was made possible by the kind generosity of my sponsors, Chester City Council (for whom I work as their Sports Development Officer), HBOS, Shell UK and Valley Sea Kayaks, with whom I had helped develop the new sea kayak I used in the crossing.

The small team who assisted me and made sure all the rules for this Guinness record attempt were adhered to included Andy King, cross Channel boat pilot, and Barry Frost, umpire from the British Triathlon Association.

As well as wanting to break the record I also saw this as an ideal opportunity to raise monies for the British Heart Foundation and am now busy collecting in all the pledges for the charity.

Ian Tordoff





Searching for North Rona

I have had a request from a chap in Ireland who is looking for an article published about a trip to North Rona by Derek Graham, one of our members. He thought it was in *Scottish Paddler* but I can't find it at all and I wondered if it perhaps had been in *Canoeist*. The trip might have been in the early 1990s but that is all I have...

Margaret Winter

The only article we had by Derek Graham was in the Jul 1990 issue on St Kilda. The article Even further than Saint Kilda by Willie Hughson in the Nov 92 issue featured an expedition to Sula Sgeir and North Rona, of which Derek Campbell was a member. That back issue is available at £1.75 inc P&P, even to Ireland.

Upright lengths

When tying a pair of open canoes to uprights on a roofrack, do the uprights need to project above the canoes? The question arose because the paddler could only source kayak uprights.

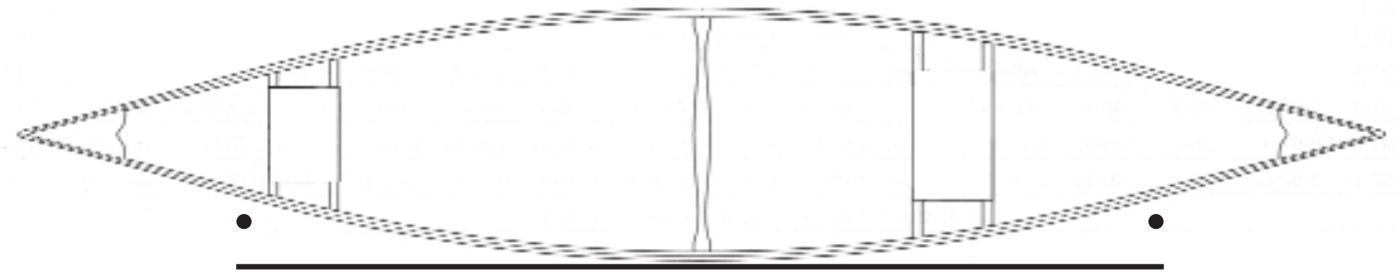
Ideally, the uprights ought to be 20 - 30% of the canoe length from each end although they may need to be closer together if your roof is not long enough or a combination of low crossbars and significant horizontal curve or gunwale lines would result in the boat making contact with the roof.

Unless the gunwales are very flat, perhaps on marathon racing canoes, they will not be able to be placed with gunwales against the uprights, the most stable arrangement for a single canoe. Thus, at least one of the canoes will need to be turned hull inwards. For canoes with hulls placed against the uprights the uprights will need to be against flatter parts of the hull, especially for canoes with fine ends. For two well rockered canoes placed hull to hull the uprights must not be so far apart that the canoes prevent each other from making contact with the uprights.

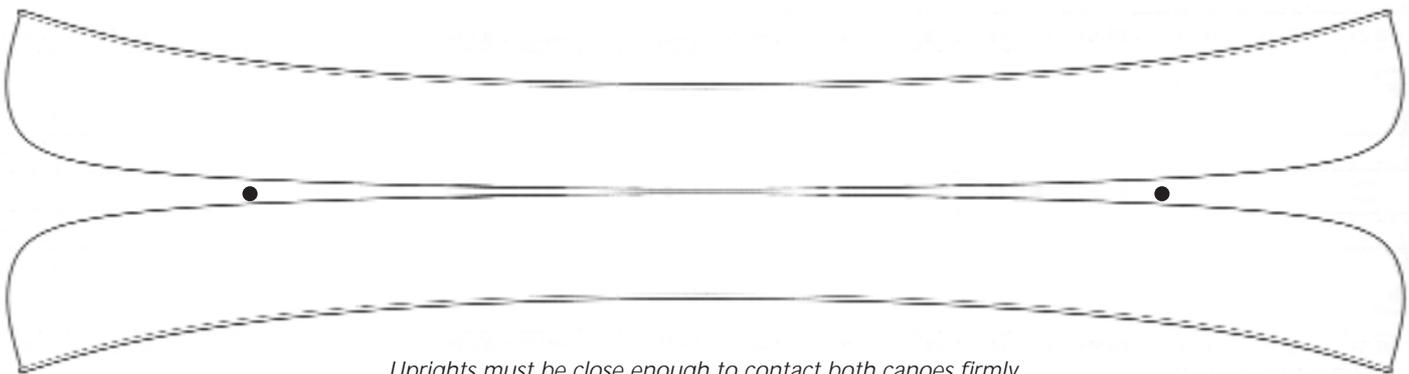
For a canoe with its gunwales against the upright the upright must reach above the top gunwale, preferably just above. Thus, the required height will depend on the beam of the canoe at that point. With the hull against the upright the height is less critical although the lower gunwale must not be able to slide away from the upright, allowing the strap to slacken.

It is desirable that the uprights should each have two horizontal cross pieces at the end so that each canoe can be tied on separately at each end, one to each cross piece. If using webbing straps, the preferred option, don't tighten them until everything is in place otherwise threading of the second strap may be difficult. This may require the assistance of others to hold the canoes in place until everything is tightened.

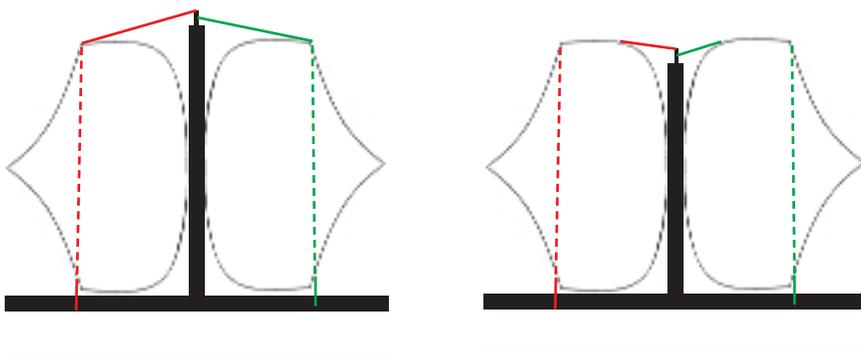
Finally, a strap right across the top at each end is a useful addition, from seat to seat if your remaining straps will not reach from crossbar to crossbar and it need not be at the uprights. For a significant trip tie down the ends as well.



Crossbars must be close enough to lift canoe clear of roof.



Uprights must be close enough to contact both canoes firmly.

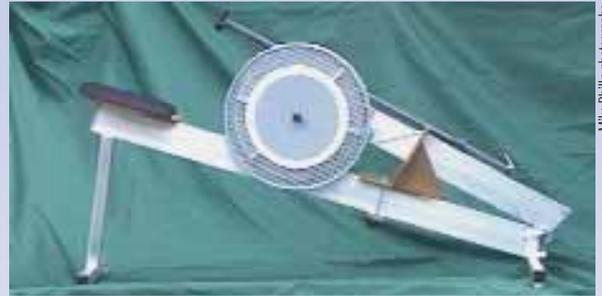


Ideally, the lines should be as near horizontal as possible at the top. Some tolerance can be allowed in upright height but shorter uprights are harder to reach.



These uprights have double tie bars at the top, important if tying on two canoes with separate straps.

Much more like the real thing



The Phillpette has become more sophisticated since we first looked at it (Dec 87, p10) but the fundamental principle remains unchanged, air resistance on fan blades, turned by pulling on a rope. The MultiStroke is intended for dragon boat racers, outrigger paddlers and sit down canoe paddlers, even allowing for sit and switch paddling.

Largely of aluminium box section, the MultiStroke folds in two for storage and can be placed on end. Four bolts lock the whole thing solid although only two need to be removed for folding.

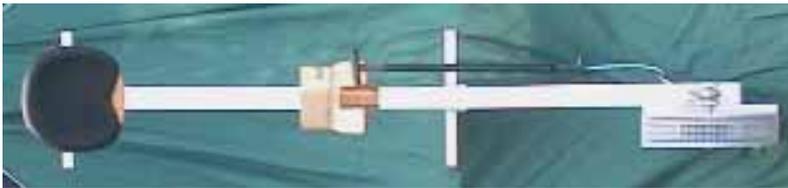
Paddling is done using a single bladed paddle with T grip except that the blade is replaced by a rope at the blade's centre of pressure, feeding round pulleys to an elastic tensioner, most of the workings being hidden inside the frame. The rope turns a fan. The harder you pull, the greater the load. The resistance of the fan can be lowered by attaching various sized disks to the side of the cage. The position of the lower hand on the shaft effects the loading and the shaft itself can be adjusted for length by a twist

grip lock. These three options give a significant choice of variables.

The foam seat is set above the plywood footrest which can be adjusted for leg length, a speedo being mounted between the feet. For the beginner the problem is deciding where the theoretical water level is, being possible to stroke too high or too low. It is also possible to pull back too far. The rope length can be fixed to prevent this. It does not feel right to be pulled up sharp at the end of the stroke but this should not happen with correct technique.

As well as the MultiStroke there is a MultiStroke+ which comes with software for use on an IBM compatible computer, ideally an old one as it loads PaddlePerfect from a floppy disk. On screen information gives the power through each stroke, a longterm display of stroke rate and power per stroke, distance to go to the finish, elapsed time, stroke length and the pace, weight adjusted boat speed and average power, depending on which of two programs is used.

Mike Phillp coerced me into a 500m time trial and I turned in a time



which was described as 'recreational' although not by me, about a third slower than the GB dragon boat team boys race. Like many gym exercises, when concentrating on the clock it is possible to get a better result by cheating or being sloppy, in this case punting backwards with the paddle, giving a long stroke as far as the computer is concerned although the extra would only lift water in the real boat rather than powering it forwards. Either the rope needs to be tied short enough to prevent this or a coach needs to be present to ensure good technique. It's probably no worse than bent back pressups or swinging pullups and no better.

For the paddler who does not have



Switching
Storage
Hidden
workings
Variable
loadings
Computer
analysis



Water level
unclear
Punting

time to get to the water, for occasions when a crew cannot be raised, for when a novice wants to train without difficulties of balance, steering or adverse weather or when a coach needs to be alongside this is a useful piece of apparatus. It is also a way of measuring how much each paddler is able to contribute to the boat.

Price (VAT free) - MultiStroke - £745.00

MultiStroke+ - £945.00

Manufactured by Phillpette Ltd, tel 020 8224 1923

The most luxurious mat I have used

The Multimat CMS 09 Self-Inflating Camping Mat is part of the Tribe Survive range aimed at family camping requirements and makes a luxuriously comfortable experience of camping, summer or winter.

Measuring around 1,980mm long by 660mm wide and weighing about 2,000g, this rectangular mat is the thickest that Multimat produce with 75mm of premium insulating foam. This foam is bonded to the inside of a durable, washable, water and mildew resistant, non toxic 75D polyester outer fabric that is pleasant to the touch and is anti slip so you stay *on* your mat all night and enjoy the comfort of the body contour supporting foam and stay off the cold hard ground.

The Auto Air Valve is the largest I have come across on any model of self inflating mat and allows air to rush into the foam as soon as the valve is given a turn. The foam quickly inflates to provide a very comfortable mat which not only supports your body but also protects it from the lumps and bumps and cold of the ground. If you

prefer a firmer mattress for a good night's sleep you can add a few lungfuls of air to the mat via the valve to pressurize it a little.

The Auto Air Valve also allows the mat to be rolled up quickly and efficiently when you pack up camp, letting air rush out very fast. The mat then fits easily into the good sized supplied stuff sack (unlike some makes which are so small as to be almost useless) for ease of carrying and storage.

Despite the fabric of the mat being tough, a pair of repair patches are supplied in the burgundy and blue of the mat's two sides to allow repairs to be made if there is a puncture.

Having tested the CMS 09 Self-Inflating Mat on some of the coldest nights of a west Wales winter, when the wind howled, sleet, rain and hail whipped the fly of my tent and the thermometer's mercury headed south, I can only say that it deserves its 5 season rating as I was wonderfully comfortable and well insulated from the cold hard ground.



John Fenna photographs

Come the summer I can see the CMS 09 being an item of luxury on family camping trips (and also used as sunbathing mat), replacing bulky heavy camp beds. Due to the size and weight of the CMS 09 Self-Inflating Mattress, I cannot see it being used much for backpacking, hiking camps though taking the mat on canoe camping trips (where the canoe and water take the weight) with no portages in prospect could be viable and its luxurious comfort appreciated in wilderness conditions.

The Multimat Tribe Survive CMS 09 Self-Inflating Camping Mat is probably the most luxurious and comfortable mat I have used and is ideal for camping trips where the weight of the camping kit does not have to be carried far, such as car born family camping trips. The comfort this mat provides helps ensure a good night's sleep and the mat rolls away for compact carrying in your transport.

Costing around £61.99, the CMS 09 should give many years of luxurious camping.

John Fenna



Non slip surface
Valve size
Pressure enhancement
Bag size
Comfort



Size
Weight

Available from Beacons Products Ltd, Unit 10, EFI Ind Est, Brecon Rd, Merthyr Tydfil, Mid Glam CF47 8RB, tel 01685 350011

John Fenna

Open Canoe Coach

Tuition and guiding on the rivers and

inland waters of West Wales

From taster days to N.G.B. awards

in beautiful surroundings.

Also available the new D.I.Y. book

"A basic guide to

MAKING YOUR OWN OPEN CANOE ACCESSORIES"

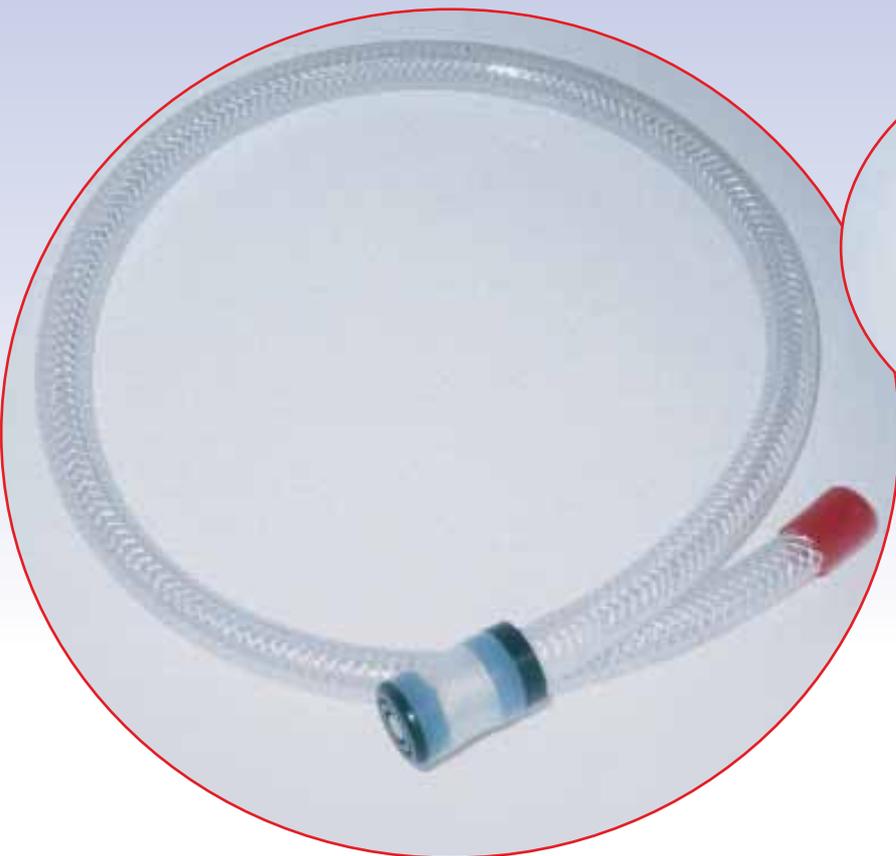
Step by step instructions and scale patterns for making eleven separate projects ranging from drybags and thwart bags to tarps and kneeling pads.

Ty-Isaf, Newchapel, Boncath, Pembrokeshire, SA370EH

Telephone: 01239 841 475

e-mail: john-fenna@lineone.net

Tubes for air and water delivery



Quick Air

Imagining the nightmare of being pinned underwater, I have wondered about the possibility of carrying a tube leading down into the boat in order to breathe the captive air contained in it. There would be problems, how to keep out water until the tube is needed, how to feed it into the boat without creating a water passage around it during normal paddling and, importantly, how not to have a slug of stale air simply moving up and down inside the tube.

Meanwhile, Motion Research have sourced Quick Air by an American firm. It consists of a reinforced tube fitted with a cap at one end and a two way valve at the other. The valve allows air to be sucked in past a spring loaded nipple and then blown out into the water so that air in the tube is always fresh. The cap ensures the tube remains free of water until needed. Ideally, the open end of the tube should be held above the surface before the cap is removed and the tube will then remain free of water even if you take the valve end out of your mouth. On the other hand, if you get water in the tube from the open end you cannot blow it out as any air from your mouth is discharged into the open water, not the tube.

Used in anger, you will probably be in a cold river with a level of panic and/or pain, having failed to free yourself after some effort, accepted that you have an emergency and located and set up the tube before you attempt to breathe. I tried it out in

calm conditions in a warm pool, simply capsizing with a finger over the already uncapped end. Breathing slowly and steadily, I found myself unable to draw in air by the third breath although it had worked earlier on land.

Dispensing with the boat, I sat on the bottom of the pool at the 900mm deep end, held the end above the surface and found the same result. Surprised, I tried a snorkel, a simple tube, with which I could just keep up continuous breathing.

It seems the water pressure on my chest cavity, even that close to the surface, plus the restriction in the valve was enough to make breathing very difficult for me. A snorkeller will have his chest cavity and mouth within a couple of hundred millimetres of the surface while the chest cavity of an inverted paddler will be somewhat deeper in the water. It is worth remembering that divers have their air delivered under pressure for their much greater depths of operation.

Use of this tube will be determined by your fitness and how far you are below the surface. Motion Research's literature suggests you will need to be within 300mm of air without saying whether this is your mouth or your chest. Before needing to use one of these tubes in earnest it would be as well to check how near the surface you need to be to sustain an air supply and how easily you could retrieve the tube from your boat and get it into position before starting to breathe, given your level of fitness.



Super Pump

Looking not dissimilar, this has a rather different purpose, to pump liquid. It consists of a plastic tube, one end of which is pushed into a piece of shaped metal tube containing a loose rounded cylindrical insert.

The metal end is placed in liquid and the tube reciprocated quickly backwards and forwards along its length with a stroke of perhaps 100mm, causing liquid to flow into the tube, even above the surface of the free liquid. Once the liquid in the tube passes back down to the surface level of the free liquid it flows as a siphon, a siphon which has been established without having to suck liquid up the tube.

Could it be used to empty water from a waterlogged boat? The manufacturer said not, because there would be no head difference. Would there be any benefit if the pumping action is sustained? Practice suggests there are more effective ways of emptying a floating boat. To operate properly there needs to be a head difference of about half a metre.

To be fair to the manufacturer, he declined a test on the grounds that it would not work in the way we suggested so we purchased a pump and used it just to see what it would do. His position is vindicated but you may still find it a useful tool for other purposes. For example, partially draining a car radiator to add some antifreeze has never been easier. If you want to siphon off some liquid without risking getting a mouthful this tube could do the job admirably.



Quick Air
Continuous
fresh air
Mouth end
excludes
water

Super Pump
No liquid
ingestion



Quick Air
Open end
admits water
Set up
complexity
Fitness
required

Super Pump
Head
difference
required

Quick Air

Length - 980mm

Tube outside dia - 18mm

Price (inc VAT) - £21.99

Manufactured by Rapid Products Inc, Englewood, CO, USA

Imported by Motion Research Ltd, PO Box 342, Weston super

Mare BS24 9WX, tel 01934 814796

Super Pump

Length - 1.78m

Tube outside dia - 15mm

Available from www.superpump.com

The huge bag for your gear

Need a big bag to carry your kit? Check out the Kit Monster from Snugpak!

Made from the same tough texturized fabric used for the Snugpak rucksacks, the Kit Monster has a 100 litre capacity and can swallow a monster load with ease.

This huge barrel shaped bag measures some 71" long x 17" diameter with a large C shaped top opening that has a tough, double ended coil zip closure. The base of the Kit Monster is double thickness for durability and inside the single main compartment there are zip closed pockets that take up the full size of the end panels and, in mesh fabric to allow you to see what is where, the lid panel. Outside you have one large zip closed pocket for bits to which you want easy access, under the Kit Monster logo.

To make carrying the loaded Kit Monster comfortable and secure, there are holdall type top handles (that clip together) made from 3" webbing strongly stitched to the sides of the bag. Buckles at each end of the top of the Kit Monster allow you to fit the supplied rucksack type shoulder straps, turning the bag into a rudimentary backpack for longer carries. These



John Fenna photographs

shoulder straps are well padded, curved for comfort and have a low slip, wicking, mesh body contact side, just as on their acclaimed rucksacks. As the Kit Monster carries with the top zip entry next to your body, easy access is denied to any light fingered characters and your kit is secure. A fully adjustable shoulder strap for one

shoulder carries, made from 2" webbing and with a well padded, nonslip shoulder protector pad, can be clipped onto D rings set into the end seams of the Kit Monster's top panel and, for quick grabs, webbing handles are mounted on each end panel.

Recognizing that 100 litres is a huge capacity, Snugpak have set 6 compression straps around the bag (two each side, one each end) allowing you to reduce the bag's capacity, stabilize awkward loads or even to strap *more* gear on the outside, should the need arise!

Generally very well made from tough materials and with an eye to detail, such as bound internal seams, the Kit Monster is a versatile solution to gear carrying needs.

Having said this, the D rings for the shoulder strap seem less strongly sewn in than might be desirable and, unless you put in a stopper hitch, the rucksack straps can slip (slightly) through their buckles under heavy loading, the sewn over ends of the rucksack strap ends make them a little fiddly to fit and almost impossible to rethread back through the buckle to lock the straps in place, hence the need for a stopper hitch. I understand that these minor gripes are being looked at and should be addressed in future production runs although simply trimming off the folded ends of the rucksack straps (and flame sealing the ends) will sort out the slipping and fitting problems here.

Overall, I find the Kit Monster to be a very practical, tough, versatile and useful kit bag that should prove very popular.

Available in olive or black, the Snugpak Kit Monster costs around £38.

John Fenna

Manufactured by Snugpak, Brett Harris Ltd, Waterloo Mills, Howden Rd, Silsden, W Yorks, tel 01535 654479.




Capacity
Base
thickness
Carrying
options
Security
Compression
straps


D ring
attachment
Strap
slippage

Rubbing strips for peel off protection

Repair tape is standard kit for users of composite boats, to cover any minor knocks and make them waterproof until there is time to give them full repair treatment. It is only a step from there to placing tape on the places which are likely to get knocks before they happen. For most boats this will be the bow and stern and under the seat.

My favourite kayak is the blue and

yellow Kevlar Interceptor which has been used for preparing over half of our guides since 1983. A lightweight boat, I decided to give it full protection when still fairly new. It would have been better from day 1 but was a secondhand team boat and I did not have it from new. I bought some heavy duty plastic tape about 1mm thick and applied strips to much of the length of the hull. These were

not for waterproofing so they could be butted together, allowing a single one to be removed and replaced if damaged. The sharp radii at the ends required more conventional and flexible canoe tape.

After over twenty years of use the hull was worn down to the Kevlar reinforcing over much of its surface after much sliding over solid objects. I wanted a new skin putting over the outside so the tape had to come off. Removing it revealed the protected part of the hull in near pristine condition, a selection of cracks and dings but the gel coat still in place, unlike the bare Kevlar elsewhere.

The hull was strengthened with a new layer of glass cloth over the outside. Rather than tape, I used sheets of Oliver's Bottom Skins over this. The pack comes as a kit of various sizes of clear self adhesive Scotch sheet, four pieces 680 x 300mm, two pieces 300 x 80mm, two similar with a pair of rounded corners, two 300 x 63mm and five 92 x 74mm. This gives plenty of scope for finding the right sized piece each time or they can be cut to fit.

Preparation instructions are quite precise, requiring a warm, dry, dust free environment and a thoroughly clean surface. I was concerned that my kayak no longer had the smooth surface required so I attempted to get everything else right.

After a year there has been no lifting of the sheets except in the occasional places where they have been knocked. Damaged sections can be trimmed away with a scalpel. The sheets are not as robust as my original heavy duty tape but they add less weight to the boat and they are transparent, rather more attractive than the dark brown strips I had before.

In fact, I have used other boats more than usual over the last year, meaning I have not given the Gate 7 material as much wear as it needs to test it thoroughly but this interim report shows it serving its purpose well. I have it in mind to apply some of the skin to the bow of my polyethylene sea kayak where the wear is starting to add up or, more correctly, subtract.

With more traditional materials in the past there would have been use of rubbing strips. The concept is absolutely sound and I am a great believer in adding some sacrificial material which can take the knocks and then be replaced when required.



The skins are barely visible after a year's use except where two about across the centre of the picture. The wear is visible on the skins, preventing wear of the hull. At intervals they can be removed and replaced.

The non tests

Over the years there have been several reviews which never made it into print. Here are some of them:

X marks the spot

A sprint K1 I was to review was first seen on trestles outside a clubhouse. Looking along the lines, I commented on the fact that the bow and stern leaned opposite ways in a fine X shape. We went round the corner to discuss something else. When I returned, the boat had gone, never to be seen again.

Unravelling the story

The stitching around the bottom of a long sleeved thermal top, made with climbers in mind, quickly fell apart. On reporting it to the makers they admitted there had been a problem in the pre production samples and they would send one with the problem resolved. The replacement never arrived, despite reminders, and I am not aware that it ever went on sale to the public.

One sided design

An Italian sea kayak had its rudder operated via a triangular plate with the front point fitted to the rudder spindle and the two control wires reaching to the rear corners of the plate. When the rudder was pushed to one side the plate turned so that both attachment points were on the same side of the centreline of the boat. Attempting to straighten up produced nothing except one of the control wires pulling off as it stretched round the rudder spindle. The boat was taken away, to be replaced by another with the fault corrected. It never came.



Seeing red

I declined to take on the road an expensive vehicle with what were probably the most dangerous set of brake lights and rear lights of any vehicle I have ever seen. I met it at an exhibition this year with a sign reading 'Safety' above it!

Performance enhancing

We have been offered various drinks, foods and supplements with promises of enhanced performance. The samples supplied have not been adequate to set up sufficient controlled tests to examine the claims so we have not attempted to review them although we have often presented them as trade news items, quoting the suppliers' claims as such and perhaps commenting on the flavour. I have not disputed the claims but have not felt that I have the evidence that a given energy bar, say, gives better performance improvement than an equivalent weight of chocolate cake or digestive biscuits.

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Mersea Island

Oysters and
yachts in
the Essex
marshes



The beach at West Mersea is popular for all kinds of sports.

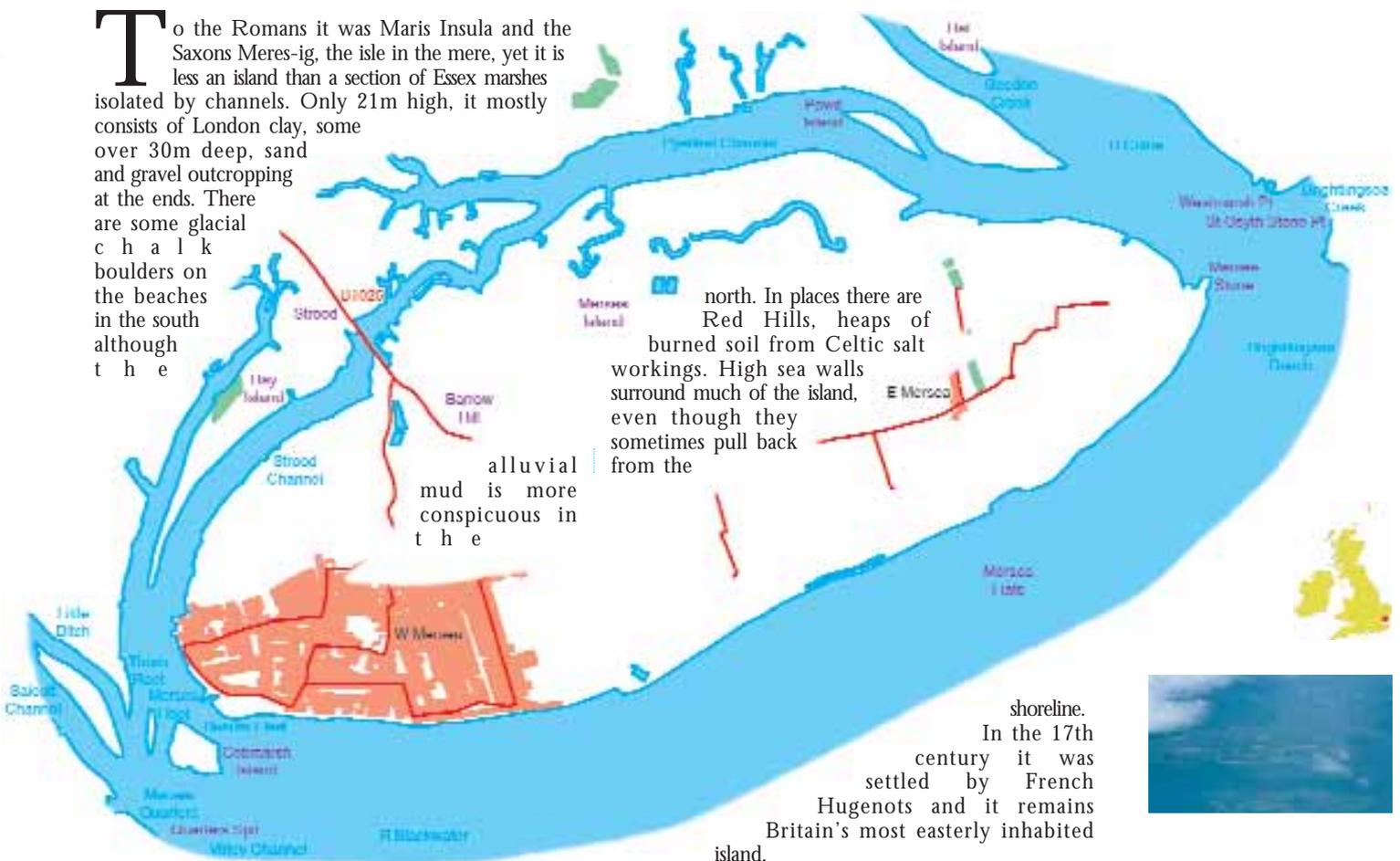
To the Romans it was Maris Insula and the Saxons Meres-ig, the isle in the mere, yet it is less an island than a section of Essex marshes isolated by channels. Only 21m high, it mostly consists of London clay, some over 30m deep, sand and gravel outcropping at the ends. There are some glacial chalk boulders on the beaches in the south although the

north. In places there are Red Hills, heaps of burned soil from Celtic salt workings. High sea walls surround much of the island, even though they sometimes pull back from the

alluvial mud is more conspicuous in the

shoreline.

In the 17th century it was settled by French Huguenots and it remains Britain's most easterly inhabited island.



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

Parking is most easily found in the far southeast of West Mersea, the island's only built up area, where there are also toilets and the Country Kitchen Café. Beach huts line the front. Windsurfers, kite surfers, jet skis, powerboats and sailing craft mean it can be busy on the water and the whole of the southeast side of the island has a buoyed inshore area where swimmers have precedence. 15km/h speed limits surround the island.

The lower tower of the church of Sts Peter & Paul dates partly from 1046 when it served the parish and the small Benedictine priory but includes some flat bricks from a Roman villa previously on the site. It was given to Rouen abbey between the 11th and 15th centuries. By it is the Mersea Island Museum with local and natural history, social and marine exhibits, the RNLI, oyster production, fishing equipment, fossils and minerals. Duck punts were built here and one is on display with a punt gun. There is a 1920s fisherman's cottage. Below the church is the ruin of the King's Hard.

Now a resort, it is the main sailing centre on the Blackwater and has been the venue of the Superhuman Quadrathlon. There are many Georgian houses.

Beyond Besom Fleet is Cobmarsh Island with traces of a mediaeval fort. In the complex area of channels Mersea Quarters receives flow from Mersea Fleet and Thorn Fleet with Packing Marsh Island between them, Little Ditch and the Salcott Channel. Flows pass over the Quarters Spit into Virley Channel. Between Little Ditch and the Salcott Channel is Sunken Island. In the early 1800 a boat load of excise men were found here with their throats cut.

There are gulls, cormorants, herons, mute swans, mallards, grebes, eiders, black brents, oystercatchers and, in the winter, greylag geese, blackheaded gulls and widgeon, a good area for overwintering birds.

The River Blackwater is ingoing to 3km/h and outgoing to 4km/h.

Across the Blackwater, Bradwell nuclear power station, built on a former airfield, was commissioned in 1962, the first pair of full size Magnox reactors in Britain.

Besom Fleet is overlooked by a surreal fleet of residential boats parked in saltings, only getting their hulls wet at the top of the tide. One with a blue hull parked prominently near the water is *l'Espérance* of 1891 which belonged to pianist Semprini, who must have formulated his *Semprini Serenade* for the BBC while watching other craft come and go. Another has kayaks on board and one is approached from the road along a path of oyster shells.

Some old barges are used as pontoons for the largest inshore fishing fleet between Lowestoft and Brixham. There used to be a huge fleet of cutter rigged oyster smacks with their vertical stems and low sterns for handling the catch. Some restored ones are still to be found here.

It was for the oysters that the Romans took an interest in Mersea. West Mersea Natives can still be bought from stalls and the old oyster pits for holding catches are in use yet. In Victorian times winkles were also supplied. The Company Shed was the headquarters of the Tollesbury & Mersea Oyster Co. There is now a fishmonger and seafood café. They serve mackerel, herring, oysters, crab, shrimps, lobsters, mussels and cockles, implements to get into them as necessary and Tobasco to season them. Customers bring accompaniments and drinks. Across the road, the Coast Inn and others cater for more conventional tastes.

There are various slips, one accompanied by an old wooden building on piles above the water. There are also toilets and free parking but the latter is limited and is quickly filled by sailors.

West Mersea Yacht Club is the busiest yachting centre on the Blackwater with a week long regatta in

The strange dry land fleet at West Mersea. L'Espérance has the light blue hull, overlooking Besom Fleet.





A path of oyster shells through the marsh.

August while Dabchicks Sailing Club caters for less affluent sailors.

In 1990 the lifeboat stationed here was called to a more unusual rescue, a taxi broken down on a causeway. When they arrived, guided by the vehicle's lights below the surface, the two occupants were on the roof, which was already 300mm underwater.

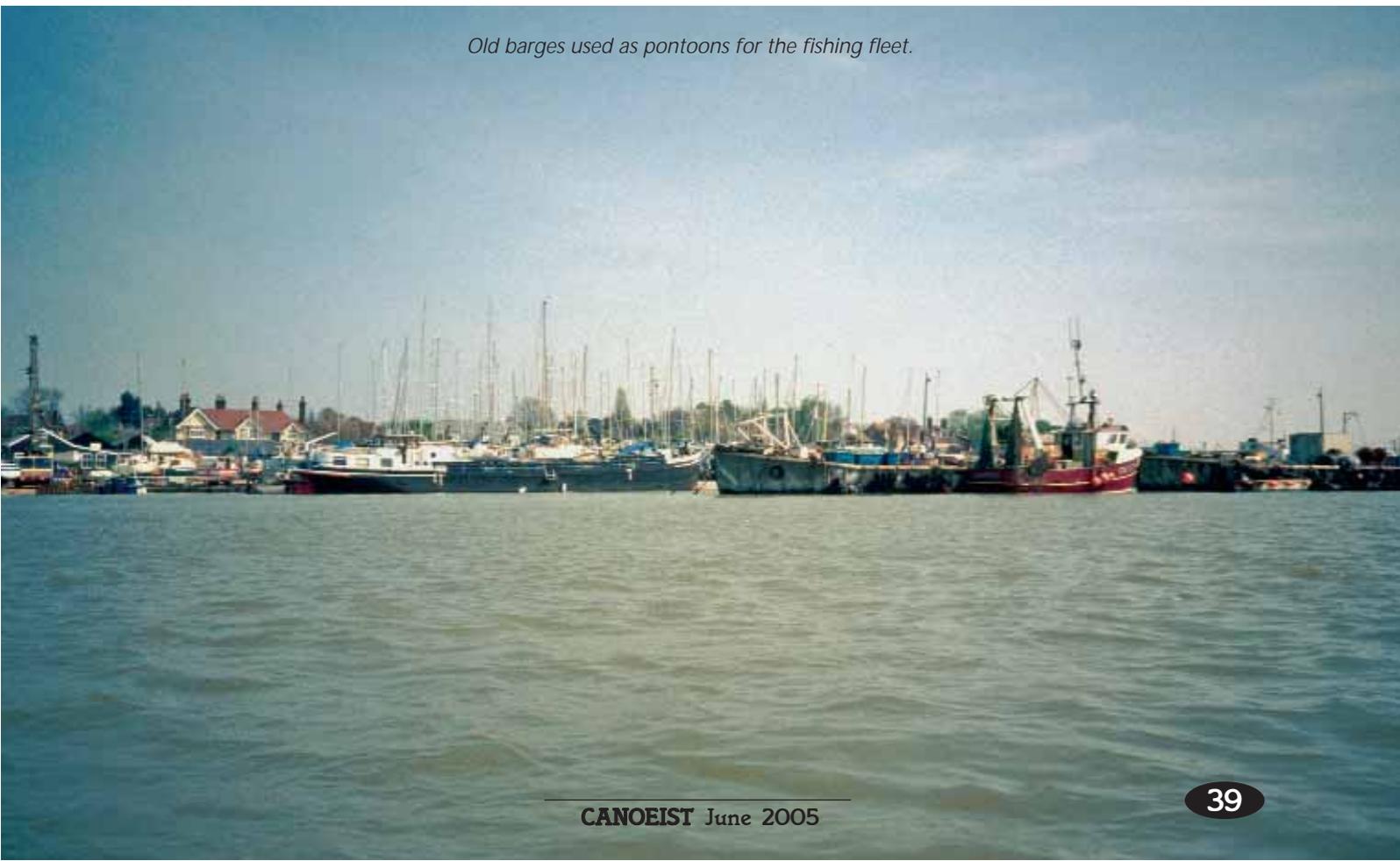
Opposite, The Lane leads up between

weatherboarded cottages to City Road, which does not even boast surfacing.

After a caravan site, Strood Channel leads into surrounds which ought to be quieter but are not because the noisy brigade like to race up and down when the tide is in. The Strood Channel needs to be taken at high water on spring tides to ensure the mud is covered.

There are wrecks on the Mersea side and also on

Old barges used as pontoons for the fishing fleet.





A slip beside a piled Essex weatherboarded building.

Ray Island which is normally attached to the mainland by Bonner's Saltings, a nature reserve with stunted blackthorns. Permission is required to land on it. In his novel *Mehalah*, Sabine Baring-Gould had Mehalah living here with her widowed mother although there are no buildings on it now.

Around the marshes there is still wildfowling using punt guns between Sep 1st and Feb 20th, these large guns spraying flocks of birds with shot.

The B1025 crosses the Strood Channel on the Strood causeway, built by the Romans. This covers at the tops of spring tides on several afternoons each month and again in the small hours, the night time depths being greater. There is little difference between the jetskis and motorbikes crossing, noise, speed and spray. The cars range from those which stop and then proceed cautiously and those which switch on their wipers and blast through, some even turning back.



Weatherboarded cottages as City Road joins the Lane.



The Strood with the footways just covered.

Buses are undeterred and offer the novelty of saltwater paddling pools for customers at no extra cost. Road signs warn of dangers if the water is over the footways and it can be half a metre over on a high spring tide. On each side of the road is fencing of reconstituted plastic, probably not sufficiently rigid for anyone thinking of climbing along it but solid enough to require climbing over for anyone portaging the opposite way.

Beside the road to the north of the channel is a small wind pylon with contrarotating blades which catch the sun, to the distraction of drivers and boaters alike. A couple of pillboxes guard the crossing.

While both sides of the Strood offer a sea of silt most of the time, the east side is little used even with the tide in. This is the quietest and most remote part of the island's coast, saltings with grass and sea aster divided up by numerous muddy channels.

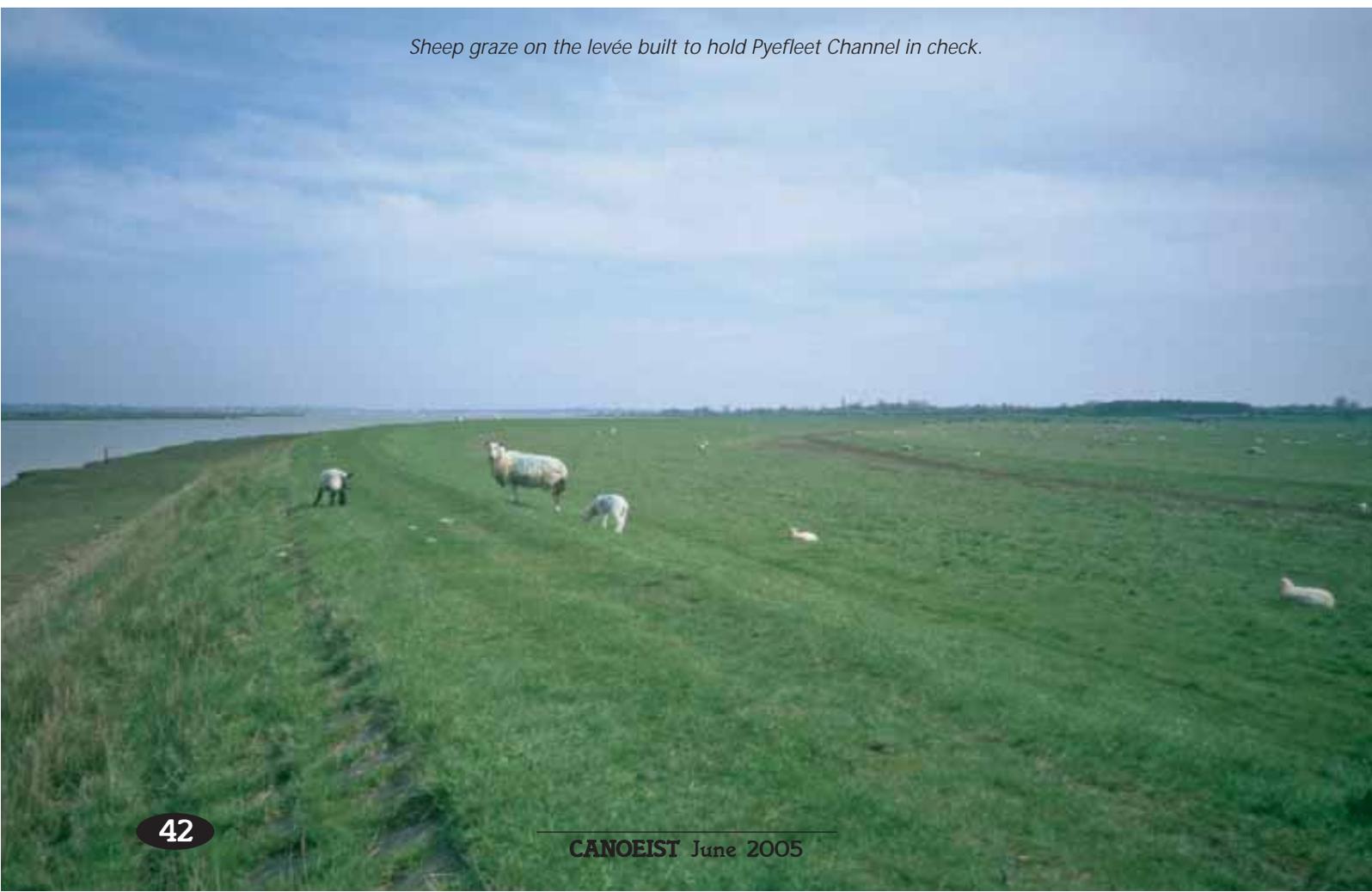
Admiralty Charts and pilots used in preparing this guide have been sponsored by the UK Hydrographic Office.

Looking from the Strood towards Fingringhoe Marsh at high tide, the mud covered and a jigsaw of saltings and channels, excellent for waterfowl.





The mysterious Barrow Hill on Mersea Island's highest point.



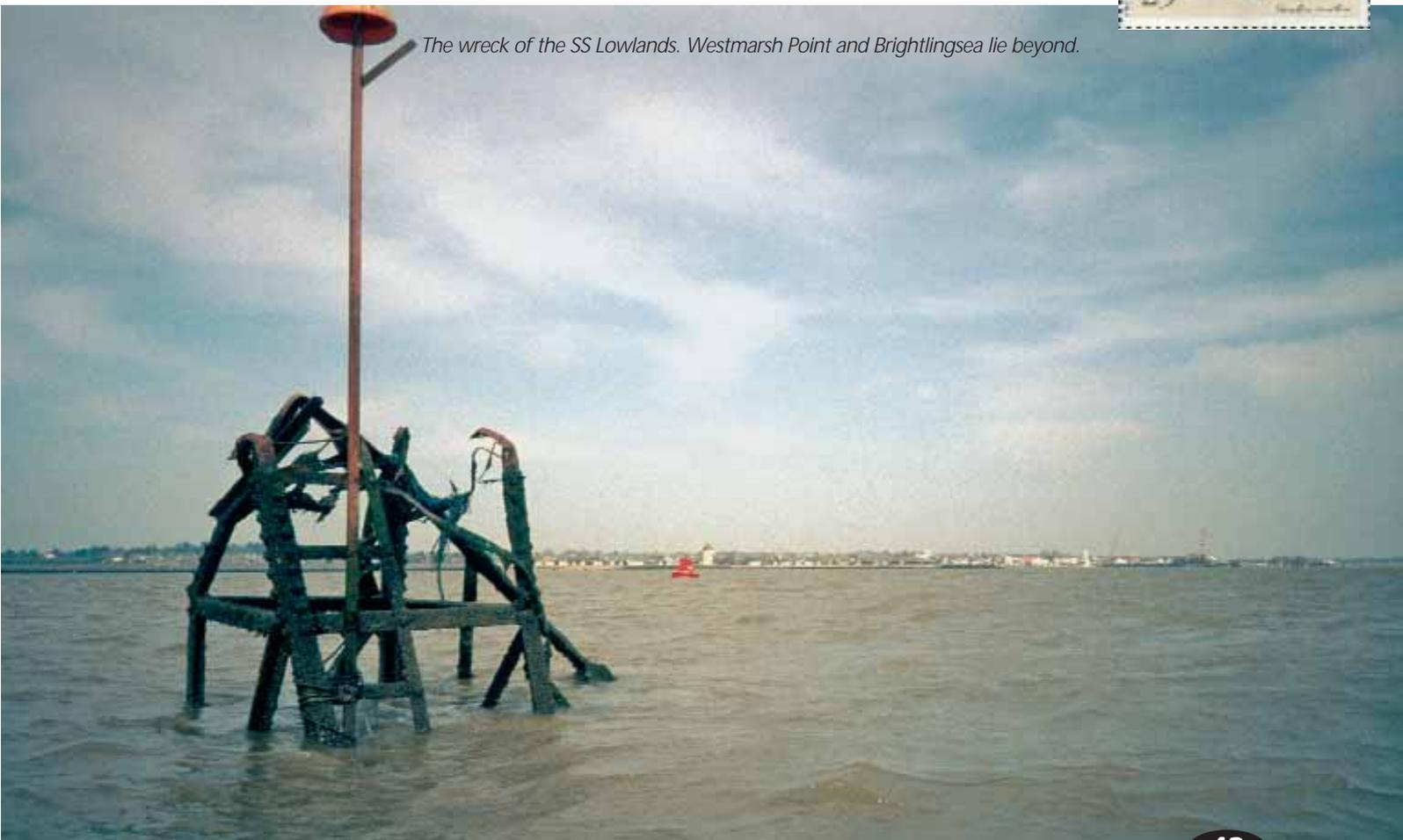
Sheep graze on the levée built to hold Pyefleet Channel in check.



An oyster smack moored in Pyefleet Channel as it joins the River Colne.

To the south at almost the highest point on the island is Barrow Hill or Grim's Hoe, topped by a tumulus 100m in diameter with oak and holly growing on it. It was excavated in 1912 and revealed a brick vault containing a lead casket, inside which was a

green glass urn with cremated bones, said to be two Viking brothers fighting over the same girl. With a full moon it is claimed that the clashing of swords and the wailing of the girl can be heard. Mehalah was listening for the sounds when her house was burnt down by her



The wreck of the SS Lowlands. Westmarsh Point and Brightlingsea lie beyond.



Grids of posts to the southeast of Mersea Stone.

FACT FILE

Distance

Mersea Island is 8km long. Lying 100m offshore, it is connected to the mainland by a causeway.

Campsites

There are campsites at West Mersea (2) and East Mersea.

Youth Hostels

There is a youth hostel at Castle Hedingham.

Water Quality

Good (A)

OS 1:50,000 Sheets

168 Colchester
Sheet 169, Ipswich & the Naze, also covers the eastern 400m.

Admiralty Charts

SC 3741 Rivers Colne & Blackwater (1:25,000). West Mersea (1:12,500).
Brightlingsea (1:12,500)
5607.9 West Mersea & Brightlingsea (1:25,000)
5607.11 Harbours on the Essex Coast. River Colne (1:25,000). Brightlingsea (1:12,500).
West Mersea (1:12,500)

Tidal Constants

West Mersea: HW Dover + 1 hr 10 mins, LW Dover + 1 hr 20 mins

Forecasts

Marinecall: The Wash - North Foreland, 09014 737 465

Sea Area: Thames

Lifeboats

Inshore: West Mersea
All Weather: Walton & Frinton

Maritime Rescue Sub Centre

Thames, 01255 675518

lover. In fact, it is thought to be the remains of a regional native ruler co-operating with the Romans. There was another such tumulus in West Mersea.

Garish oilseed rape can draw attention to Fingringhoe Ranges to the north. When in use, a red flag should be flying. There is a lookout hut on the north shore of Pyefleet Channel and firing should stop for passing craft although there is always the risk of finding unexploded ordnance.

Withies mark the fairway for larger boats. The tide ebbs at quite a rate and an opposing easterly breeze from Brightlingsea Creek can kick up steep waves. The middle of the channel has oysterbeds with grounding not permitted, the oyster season being opened by the Mayor of Colchester in a boat.

Pewit Island still has lapwings around it, together with reed warblers, skylarks, cuckoos and snipe on the surrounding land. The small community of East Mersea produce wheat, barley, oats, rape and pigs, sheep and poultry. In the past it was better known for wildfowling and smuggling.

Pyefleet Channel discharges into the River Colne opposite Brightlingsea Creek and just below Geedon Creek where it splits round Rat Island. Flows run out to 3km/h and in to 2km/h (Sep 01 guide). On the Mersea shore are the remains of the wreck of the *SS Lowlands*.

A tower with a conical top stands across the river at Westmarsh Point by Brightlingsea, another yachting centre. On St Osyth Stone Point on the other side of Brightlingsea Reach is the first Martello Tower of the east coast line. It was used by the Royal Navy as HMS Helder during the Second World War. Built in 1810, it now

forms the East Essex Aviation Society Museum with parts a P51D Mustang and a Tempest a recovered from the sea and displays from both World Wars.

The Mersea Stone is, in fact, just shingle although more solid than most of the surrounding landscape. It was important for the defence of Colchester so Henry VIII built a large triangular blockhouse in case the French attacked. It was occupied successively by the Royalists and the Roundheads in the Civil War, was refortified against the Dutch and was demolished in the 18th century. Barbed wire, gun emplacements and mines were then prepared in case of a visit by Hitler and there is still the risk of unexploded ordnance. Some pillboxes remain.

Off the first part of the south coast are grids of posts, most too close together to allow a kayak through. This is now the holiday shore with low sand cliffs in front of the 14ha Cudmore Grove Country Park with its visitor centre and picnic area. It is also a coast with at least three caravan parks.

The Mersea Flats dry out to 2km offshore at the Cocum Hills where an east cardinal mark is placed near the wreck of the *Moliette*, a concrete schooner with a noteworthy history. After running through Southend pier she was moved here and used on the shore as a scandalous nightclub, raided by the police with some customers preferring to dive into the sea rather than be recognized. During the Second World War she was placed out on the edge of the drying flats and used as a target. Somebody later dredged up the brass shell cases which were used to fund the building of a bungalow of the same name on the island.

Other catches include sprats, cod, herrings and shrimps.

East Mersea had a priory related to the Priory of Cluny. The tower of the thousand year old St Edmund's church has a turret in the corner and is near a moat. It has an 1848 grave of a 15 year old girl, covered over with an iron cage to deter body snatchers. Baring-Gould was vicar here for a decade from 1871 but didn't like the place, the people, the climate, the mosquitoes or the smell, as indicated in *Mehalah*, less well known than his hymn *Onward Christian Soldiers*. Three years after he left, the rectory had to be pulled down following an earthquake with its epicentre near Wivenhoe.

The remaining part of the coast with its sea defence wall hides wind generators and sewage works before arrival back at the beach huts of West Mersea.

No picnic for Ozzy

We arrived at the head of Obabika Lake late in the afternoon, tired after facing a stiff headwind, to find our planned campsite already occupied. So, politely, we moved on to the next. The wilderness was busy and group camping locations were filling up fast. Half an hour later we moved on yet again.

Now we had no choice; the only remaining campsite within easy paddling distance that day lay on the other side of the lake. We resigned ourselves to a rough crossing through whitecaps and paddled our canoes close together for security until we were in sight of a large, flat area near the mouth of a stream.

As we pulled hard on our paddles, a darkly clad figure came out of the forest and stood, arms akimbo, on a rocky promontory directly in front of us. The man was dressed entirely in black, black boots, tight, black jeans; a silver studded, black leather belt which carried the sheath of a large hunting knife and a black sleeveless T shirt. His exposed arms were covered in tattoos and the words 'Ozzy Osborne' were emblazoned across his chest. A tinge of concern coursed through me.

'Can I help you?' Ozzy demanded aggressively.

'Er, we were rather hoping we could put up a couple of tents. Is that okay?' I replied, hopefully.

'Well, that poses a bit of a conundrum,' retorted Ozzy. 'There are quite a lot of us.'

'We won't take up much room. We're very tired,' I said meekly, half expecting him to produce a bat, bite off its head and then start on mine.

'Sorry. You'll have to move on,' came his reply.

'Let's try over there,' I said to our group members, pointing to a near by location on the other side of the stream. We paddled dejectedly over to some rocks several hundred metres away. I leapt out and scrambled up the edge of a slab to the top. It wasn't a perfect campsite and it would be a struggle to carry up all our gear but, once we were established, it would offer a superb view of the inlet and the lake beyond. We decided to make do. Before long a fire was crackling merrily. Our spirits rose.

Supper was linguine with basil pesto and roasted pine nuts washed down with a crisp Sauvignon. Life was suddenly good again. As the evening sky darkened, the only sounds came from our campfire and waves lapping against the cliff, heaven. The sandman came early that night and we all headed for our warm sleeping bags.

Next morning I was up making coffee as the sun reached its first

warming fingers over the horizon. Suddenly, I heard the sound of my daughter cry out. 'Dad! Quick! A bear's trying to get into my tent!'

Flushing with patriarchal bravado, I ran through the bush to our tents, erected a safe distance from our cooking area. Sure enough, there was a bear. It was a big black male, standing on its hind legs and pushing down repeatedly on my daughter's tent.

'Don't panic!' I shouted, looking around for help. None was evident. Then I saw a paddle lying on the ground. I grabbed it and started beating it against a near by tree trunk. The bear, only three metres away, stopped leaping on the tent and turned its full height and attention towards me. We stared at each other. I made a sort of squeaking sound that, in squirrel language, told the bear not to be frightened. It wasn't.

Again I beat the tree but this time the bear turned and ran off down the rocks and into the lake. We watched in awe as the powerful animal stroked its way effortlessly to the other side of the stream and hauled itself out. Pausing, it glanced this way and that, then raised its nose and sniffed the air. It sniffed again, seemingly interested in the edge of the forest some hundred metres further along the bank where a thin trace of wood smoke hung over the water.

Its curiosity aroused, the beast shuffled along the shoreline towards Ozzy's camp. For the briefest, scientifically measured moment I toyed with the idea of shouting a warning but the image of that angry camper in black standing on those rocks the night before, denying us comfort in our hour of need, came flooding back to me. Would I let nature take its course?

Everything in me screamed 'Yes,' but then I overcame the urge and yelled out 'Hey, look out! There's a bear headed your way!'

In a moment, about two dozen youths tumbled out of their tents in various states of undress, followed by Ozzy himself. They all ran for the safety of their canoes and the lake. The bear, now left totally to its own devices, settled down and devoured all consumables in sight.

Ozzy gathered his group about two hundred metres offshore in their canoes and watched helplessly as their food supplies disappeared down the throat of the greedy bear. Turning, Ozzy spotted us at the top of the cliff. He looked up at me pleadingly and called out over the water 'There's a bear in our camp. He's eating all our food. Can you help us?'

Smiling wryly, I looked around at the rest of my group before replying. 'That poses a bit of a conundrum,' was all I said.





Talking trash

'Welcome to Canada,' smiled the friendly official.

I was exceedingly pleased to hear those words. I had just crossed over the divide between the US and the Yukon after a brief visit to Skagway, Alaska, to scope out the Chilkoot Trail. I was glad to be on home ground again, very glad. On my way to Alaska, a megalomaniacal US customs official had turned my pleasantly laid plan of a picnic in Dyea into an interrogation nightmare. He questioned the lineage of my biological parents; had I, within living memory, been to a rodeo and ridden a mad cow or eaten a steak or had I been in close proximity to a mosquito at any time during the month of July in the bush in northern Canada? Enough was enough. I decided to turn tail and have my picnic in Canada instead. As I was driving along past the emerald bays and white shores of the southern lake district of the Yukon I remembered another time when I was exceedingly pleased to hear those words. On that particular occasion I really had to chuckle.

It was the middle of July and a group of eight of us stopped in the small town of Saranac Lake, New York, to pick up some fresh groceries. We were on our way to Middle Saranac Lake where we planned to spend a long weekend camping, hiking and canoeing. An hour later our canoes were loaded up with a mountains of food, tents, stoves and personal baggage and we were paddling across the lake to an idyllic island campsite. Conditions were perfect. Our plan for the weekend was to have a barbeque that evening, climb Ampersand Mountain the following day, then paddle up the Saranac River and back before returning to Ottawa on the Sunday evening.

Although the trail to the summit of Ampersand Mountain is almost 1,100 metres long with a steep stony staircase along the way, we reached the top by early afternoon. The panorama from the bald, rocky summit is absolutely superb. The Saranac Lakes and a myriad of ponds lie to the north. Stretched to the south are all the highest peaks in the area, the Great Range, the MacIntyres, Santanoni, the Swards and a number of smaller mountains. It was a superb hike enjoyed by all.

The next day we paddled up the Saranac River and then returned to break camp and drive back to Ottawa, overall, so far, a fantastic weekend. We stopped once again at the same general store in Saranac Lake town to buy a few snacks for the journey home. I parked alongside while the rest of the team shopped. By the side entrance I noticed a dumpster. In the trailer was all our garbage from the weekend. The dumpster would be perfect. We wouldn't have to suffer that putrid smell all the way home. Dumping our trash here seemed fair enough to me, particularly as most of the goods had been originally purchased from that same establishment.

I was about to swing the first bag of waste into the dumpster when I heard a gravel throated voice. 'Don't even think about it!' I looked

around. Sitting by the exit to the store was a tough looking old lady having a smoke break. She sounded like Johnny Cash and it looked like I was about to fall into a burning ring of fire. 'Take yer trash back to Canada; it's illegal to leave it here,' she rasped. Terrified and with my tail between my legs, I returned to the van, garbage bag in hand.

There's always one person in a group who keeps everyone waiting and in this group it was Bob. Ten minutes later the team was tucking into crisps and chocolate bars in the back of the van but there was no sign of Bob. The team was getting impatient and so was I. Bob had been doing this all weekend. Eventually he sauntered back to the van in another world, munching away. It was time to give Bob a wake up call. 'Hey, Bob,' I said before he got into the van. 'Do me a quick favour and toss this garbage bag into that dumpster over there.'

'Sure,' he said naively.

He was mid pitch when the voice crackled again, even louder. 'Don't even think about it.' Too late, Bob had already released the slime dripping black bag and it was executing a perfect parabola into the dumpster. The little old lady was up in a trice with cigarette packet in hand and was writing down the company details and the registration of the van. 'Don't think you can make a break for the border and get away with this...'

The rest of the sentence was lost in the slipstream as we made our getaway. A few uneventful hours of motoring later we reached Canadian customs at the Québec border. 'Anything to declare?' enquired the pleasant agent.

'No, nothing.'

'Are you bringing back the same number of canoes that you left with?'

'Yes.'

'Are you bringing back everything you took into the US from Canada?'

'Absolutely.'

'Including all your garbage?' I was gobsmacked. The little old lady had a longer arm than the law. Who was she, Ma Barker?

I thought about it, then looked the customs agent straight in the eye and replied, completely truthfully but with a wry grin, 'Absolutely.'

'Are you sure?' repeated the agent with a bigger grin.

'Absolutely certain, officer,' I replied confidently.

The friendly official flashed a huge smile as he waved me through. 'In that case, welcome to Canada.'

Arctic tusk force

The sky above Dundas Harbour was crystal clear as we made our way eastwards in three double kayaks along the south coast of Devon Island in Nunavut's far north.

Located on the north side of Lancaster Sound, opposite Baffin's rugged headlands, Devon is a large uninhabited island capped with an extensive, permanent snow and ice plateau. The island is very remote but traces of Franklin's ill fated 1845 Arctic expedition in search of the Northwest Passage have been found on the southern beaches and the wild valleys and ice littered coastal waters are teeming with wildlife.

Apart from a few archaeological digs and a handful of Franklin buffs, the island is seldom visited. We were there for a week of exploratory kayaking and wildlife viewing and what a week it had been. Although the island had been shrouded in mist for most of our stay, the wildlife had made itself very visible. Musk ox, polar bear, snowy owls and herds of Arctic hares had appeared almost upon demand. Our shutters had been busy. Now it was time to see whether the marine life was going to be as cooperative. We had set off in our kayaks, hoping to get sightings of beluga, walrus and possibly even the elusive orca.

Our kayaks knifed through mirror calm waters and the reflections of already awe inspiring icebergs seemed to double their size. We were eight kilometres from camp on a perfectly calm day with 24 hours of daylight; what could possibly go wrong? Pamela, my partner in the front of the kayak, suggested that we paddle a little closer to a rocky headland some distance away from the rest of the group; she wanted to get photographs of some spectacularly folded rock layers covered in bright yellow lichen. After firing off a few snapshots we headed back out to open water to rejoin the group.

As we made the turn an irresistible force collided with us from underneath, lifting the rear end of the kayak completely clear of the water. I looked over my right shoulder and less than a metre away I saw a massive, whiskered head with two enormous tusks lunging towards me. We had just got up close and personal with a rogue male walrus.

'What was that?' asked Pamela, calmly continuing to paddle. She hadn't seen the beast in question and was oblivious to the attack; she thought we'd risen up over a large rock owing to the swell. This impression was slightly flawed as there was no trace of a ripple on the surface of the ocean.

'We'd better get back to the rest of the group,' I said, trying desperately not to display any hint of fear or panic. 'There's safety in numbers,' I thought.

Like their distant cousins, the seals, walrus are webfooted pinnipeds and are huge lumbering mammals on land, often weighing over a tonne. On an ice floe his movements are not exactly Gretzkyesque but

put him in the water and his movements soon become as graceful and as agile as the Great One.

As we paddled towards the rest of the group, I saw a huge mottled back break the surface to my left and realized that our newly made marine acquaintance had passed underneath our kayak and surfaced for another inspection of the target. There was no point in trying to deceive Pamela any longer so I came clean. 'That's what lifted us out of the water; keep paddling!'

Her response was to calmly put down her paddle and start rummaging for her camera. 'Where the heck is my zoom lens?' she said.

'I don't think you need it,' I replied. By now the animal was six metres away and still heading for us at full speed. At about two metres the walrus disappeared below the surface and swam right underneath us for another hull inspection. I suppose you could call it pinniped periscope depth.

There was no collision this time but the charge had the desired effect. We were now paddling as hard as we could towards the rest of the team, who were watching our plight with astonishment from five hundred metres away. At this point I got that sinking feeling, literally. The kayak was becoming sluggish and unresponsive and my cockpit was now somehow completely full of icy Arctic water. We were going down. By the time we reached the rest of the group we were wallowing up to our armpits, still in the kayak but totally submerged. These rats were not going to abandon their sinking ship; the idea of evacuating the comparative safety of a sunken kayak to join a walrus in his backyard was somehow not particularly attractive. Like true skippers, we stayed with the vessel.

Our companions rafted up on either side of us to make our underwater silhouette seem more intimidating (the orca is the only enemy a walrus has so we tried to appear orca like from underneath). Feeling a little more secure, we held on for support while the rest of the team paddled the clumsy raft to shore. The walrus continued to circle, his beady eyes firmly focused on us. Eventually we made it to shore and hauled out on the beach. An inspection of the kayak revealed a half metre long gash in the canvas skin; another two centimetres and my rear end would have had an ivory insert. Now all we had to do was hike twelve miles with the remains of our craft while the rest of the team paddled back to the campsite.

So, our Arctic adventure was over. We'd visited Thule sites a thousand years old and been privileged to view a wide variety of wildlife and, somewhere down there, beneath the frigid waters of Lancaster Sound, lives a walrus as big as a nuclear submarine with a penchant for petrifying paddlers and an appetite for folding kayaks.





Around Cape Horn and back to Chelsea

The entry in the *South American Pilot* was grim: '...as inhospitable a land as is to be found anywhere on the globe. The terrain is mountainous, presenting an alternation of matted forest, bare rock and deep bogs which is intersected by many deep channels into peninsulas and islands. The scenery is magnificently stern; cloud and mist usually screen the high peaks and snowfields.'

What were we thinking? I was one of four sea kayakers attempting to be the first team to paddle around Cape Horn, the most southerly tip of South America. It's a gnarled finger of land pointing into the vastness of the Southern Ocean and steeped in legends of catastrophic shipping disasters, huge rogue waves and hurricane force winds called williwaws that descend from the mountain tops and flatten everything in their path.

We stood on Herschel Island cliff in southern Chile, looking across at the four miles of storm tossed sea that separated us from our goal. We'd spent 18 months preparing for one of the most groundbreaking sea kayak journeys ever attempted. It was a frenetic period of packing supplies, shipping kayaks, poring over maps and charts and preparing ourselves physically for a journey to the bottom of the world, in our minds probably never to return.

One of our biggest challenges was raising sufficient funds for the expedition. We stopped at nothing and stooped to everything in our attempts to raise cash. One of the most interesting initiatives was suggested to us by a philatelist friend who told us stamp collectors pay big money for first day covers. These are special stamp issues that often come with commemorative envelopes to celebrate a special event, like landing on the moon or climbing Mount Everest. He convinced us to have a thousand special envelopes printed to honour our journey. We'd have them postmarked in the most southerly post office in the world at Puerto Williams, Chile. These would become valuable collector's items that could be sold for huge profits. What a great idea! We signed all the envelopes, had them franked and sent them back to England for resale to fanatical stampies. We rubbed our hands with delight at the prospect of making an almost obscene amount of money.

Then we set off on our voyage. We successfully rounded Cape

Horn on December 22nd 1977 after an eventful and exciting journey. After 22 days of paddling, we completed a 225 mile circumnavigation of the entire Cape Horn archipelago. We arrived back in the UK to a hero's welcome. TV stations and the paparazzi hounded us for about two days and then it was all over. Yesterday's news was wrapping today's fish and chips. The team members drifted apart and got on with their lives. I moved to Canada.

In December 2003, almost 26 years to the day since we rounded the cape, I was enjoying a pint in Chelsea's Pub in the Gatineau Hills. Conveniently situated in the middle of the Chelsea - Ottawa commuter corridor, the pub has a varied clientele ranging from village artisans to big city politicians.

On this particular day I found myself seated next to Doug, a man who understands wood better than almost anyone. Doug knows a lot about almost everything. A wellspring of facts, figures and statistics, he's an unbeatable opponent in pub trivia competitions. He is also a very fine cabinetmaker, of the non political kind. So, it didn't come as too much of a surprise when Doug told me he was a keen philatelist. Then he told me that he had just ordered three first day cover envelopes from a stamp catalogue in England. He noted that these envelopes were produced to celebrate the First British Kayak Expedition to Cape Horn in 1977.

'I was on that,' I said casually.

Given the crowd that hangs around this pub, sometimes the truth doesn't stand in the way of a good story so Doug could be forgiven for thinking that a few pints may have unhinged my contact with reality. Doug finally believed me, though, more out of decency than gullibility.

A week later I sat in the pub holding a 26 year old envelope with my signature on it. It was one of the original envelopes posted by four young hopefuls who were convinced they were going to make their fortune. Doug sold me all three for fifteen bucks. Now I knew why it took us more than three years to payoff our expedition debt. We were good paddlers back then but making money proved more elusive. I've since learned it's wiser to invest in land than postage.

In league with a professional poacher

His name is Norman Carter and he's a poacher.

He's also a bit of a character. They say he's a stocky, muscular man with a swarthy face etched with deep laugh lines. He has a cocky, devil-may-care swagger, dancing steel blue eyes and a very cheeky grin. His hands are enormous. He never buys a fishing licence and he only fishes private waters stocked regularly with trout, thus ensuring longevity for the species and plenitude for his freezer. He normally fishes at night with worms on fly only waters but he never fishes out of season. You could say that in his own strange way Norman Carter is a man of principle. Apparently, he also has a wicked sense of humour.

It was mid June and I was casting my line on some private waters owned by a friend. I am no lover of live bait; the artificial fly is my lure of choice. There had been an evening hatch of Brown Drakes and my creel was weighty with a brace of fat rainbows. It was time to go home for a fresh trout supper so I made my way back up the rough track that led from the water's edge to my car. By now it was pitch black. As I swung around the first bend in the road a short, broad figure came into my headlamps. He was carrying a wheel. I passed him, pulled over and, leaning across to the passenger side, wound down the window and waited for him to catch up.

'Got a problem?' I asked.

'Flat tyre,' he replied, looking shiftily left and right.

'No spare?'

He shook his head.

'Where's your car?'

'Back down the road.'

'Do you live around here?'

He nodded, obviously a man of few words.

'Jump in. I'll give you a ride,' I offered.

'Nah; it's okay. There's nobody open at this time of night around here. I'll just walk to my friend's place and borrow one until the morning.'

'You can borrow mine if you like. I haven't got far to go and you can drop it off tomorrow after yours has been fixed. Jump in and I'll run you back to your car.'

'Okay but I'd rather walk if you don't mind,' he replied in a low voice.

I jumped out of the car and rummaged in the boot for my spare.

'Okay. There you go,' I said cheerfully, handing him the wheel. 'Here's my business card. I work from home. Just drop the wheel off when you have time tomorrow.' He was obviously embarrassed and I didn't want to make things worse. There's got to be some trust in this world so I didn't ask him any more questions. Then, hardly giving the incident a second thought, I set off once again for home and a hearty supper.

The next day I gave the owner of the water a call just to thank him and to describe the way in which the butter baked meat had fallen off the bone. In passing I mentioned the guy with the flat tyre. My host seemed puzzled.

'Can't think who that could have been unless it was that darned poacher. Norman they call him, Norman Carter. I've never been able to prove anything but I know he's pulling fish from my water. He won't be able to get away with it if I come across him. All my fish have a little red tag on their adipose fin.'

Intrigued but too busy to give too much mind to our discussion, I decided to get down to another chapter of my book and there on the keyboard I got lost for the rest of the day. It was late evening when I heard a knock at the front entrance. I went downstairs and opened the door; there was nobody there. I stepped out onto the porch and peered left and right. Not a sign of a soul. I turned back to examine the items that had been left on my doorstep. There was my wheel, the very wheel I had lent to the stranger the night before. There was a crumpled piece of paper pushed into one of the bolt holes so I tugged it out and read it in the half light of the doorway. The writing was large and scrawled but legible. There was only one word and some initials.

'Thanks. NC.'

Beside the wheel was a plastic bag which I picked up. It was quite heavy. Taking a quick glance inside I saw that it contained several very nice rainbow trout. 'Now this is getting interesting,' I thought. I went back inside and emptied the trout into a bowl. They were fine fish indeed, six of them, all around a pound and a half. Every one had a little red tag in its adipose fin. 'One good deed deserves another I thought,' and decided upon trout for the second night in a row.



Touring

Roadford

Saturday dawned fine but chilly as the entire management and staff of Solway Dory rose from their sleeping bags by the gently rippling waters of the lake and bleary eyed Nigel Cross stumbled from his caravan to be greeted by the cheerful Roadford staff. Graham and Veronica Hallett arrived fresh from their B&B just down the road.

By 10.00am the sun was up, a nice breeze blowing and canoes arriving from all ends of the known world, Falmouth, St Ives, Plymouth, Looe, Kelly, Exeter, Exmouth, Totnes and some from further afield like Sussex and Allithwaite, Cumbria. Greetings and bits of rig were exchanged and soon we were enjoying some sweet sailing. James Berwick, enjoying the luxury of a mast to support his lugsail, was testing his family size Old Town canoe for the first time. Phil Sheardown, with a neat lateen rig, was discussing the possibilities of rigging one of the large Voyageur canoes he runs on the River Dart with the two Daves. Simon and Liz Whitehead were soon out in their Klepper, as was Les Richmond in his kayak with curiously effective boxy outriggers.

Jan Poskitt, Oliver, Dave, Dave and I repaired to the café for lunch, being joined by Keith and Ann. Pete Whitfield arrived at this point, to be told by the self righteous that he could not join them for lunch unless he had sailed there! Neil Whitt, one of the local IC sailors, arrived just before lunch to try his 1947 Uffa Fox designed IC but did not stay long. Another IC was out sailing briskly in the afternoon, dunking its crew on occasion. Following another excursion to the café for tea there were 14 sailing canoes out on the lake together. Up until this time there had been little interest in capsizing practice but Pete Whitfield, with his most ambitious rig of the day, 75 sq ft, suddenly decided to demonstrate the art, sparking an instant change of course from all around. Nigel Cross won the race to the rescue, closely followed by Dave Stubbs, and soon Pete was emptying the bath water with a large bucket.

After this excitement it was time to come off the water. Last out were Robin and Donna James who were experiencing trouble with the sheeting of their mizzen. The evening was clear so some of the group made an excursion to Brentor, with its small church set on top of the rocky outcrop, to admire the view. The rest went straight to the pub! The food was reasonably priced, good and plentiful. Some even had puddings!

Skittles followed with much merriment. It is surprising how easy it is for the ball to go right through the skittles without hitting any. Highlights were James' performing this trick with his first two balls, saying he just needed to get all with the last ball and doing so, and Donna's getting the first spare of the evening. Sunday dawned wet and windy with no prospect of racing. This did not deter Iain Hutchison, who arrived with a new main hull for his outrigger canoe, so new that the glue had hardly set. First on the water in a fiercely gusting wind were Ian and James, whose long canoe proved just what was needed for the conditions. Nigel was next on the water while I, demonstrating that I knew how to capsize, was first in the water and providing some practice for those who were doing a course in the rescue boat. Simon and Liz ventured out for a short paddle and then retired to their motorhome to provide welcome cups of coffee and conversation to varied bedraggled sailors. Prizes were awarded to Nigel for perseverance in Sunday's weather and to James for his spirited sailing and skittling, all in all an enjoyable and encouraging weekend with 16 boats and crew attending, 12 of whom were from the south and west.

Warin Kelly

Warin delightedly counted fourteen boats on the water as the gusts became more sudden and forceful. I caught one of these and was catching Pete quickly with half his sail area until it left me and capsized him. Hence I was able to test the rescue skills learnt in the recent training session at Bala. I turned to get my only outrigger clear and then held his gunwale tight while he clambered in for the second time and used his paddle to start emptying.

Other boats then arrived with bigger bailers than mine. We were able to turn the ensemble and set some sail for the launch site.

Nigel Cross

50

7th Scottish Sea Symposium

'Almost overwhelming,' was the first reaction of many delegates arriving at the Gaelic College, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig on Skye, not only because of the sheer number of sea kayakers assembled in one place but also because of the range of sessions on offer. Is it possible to have too much choice?

I was taught that lists are lazy journalism but just listen to the selection which faced delegates on the first session of day one, *Reflections* slide show with Franco Ferrero or two seminars, *Introduction to Tides* with Paul Mills or *Science of Maps & Charts* with Donald Thomson. These could be followed by either *Channel Island & Near Coasts of France* slide show with Kevin Mansell, *Gathering Tidal Information* with Paul Mills or *Making a Map or Chart* with Donald Thomson. It sounds a full morning but, wait a moment, that was just for those who wanted to stay dry! For those who fancied a practical morning there was even greater choice, *Global Positioning Systems* with Andy Stamp, *Introduction to Folding Kayaks* with Mike McClure and Brian Wilson, *Foundation Skills* with Jas Hepburn and George Reid, *Forward Paddling* with Sean Morley and Nigel Robinson or *Greenland Skills* with Soren Rasmussen and still we're not finished. Delegates who wanted to explore some of the spectacular Skye coastline (there were visitors from Canada, Denmark and the Netherlands) could choose between three separate full day paddles. By anyone's standards that was a lot of choice and bear in mind this was just the selection for the first morning of the first day; there were three days like that, morning and afternoon! You see what I mean by this event being almost overwhelming?

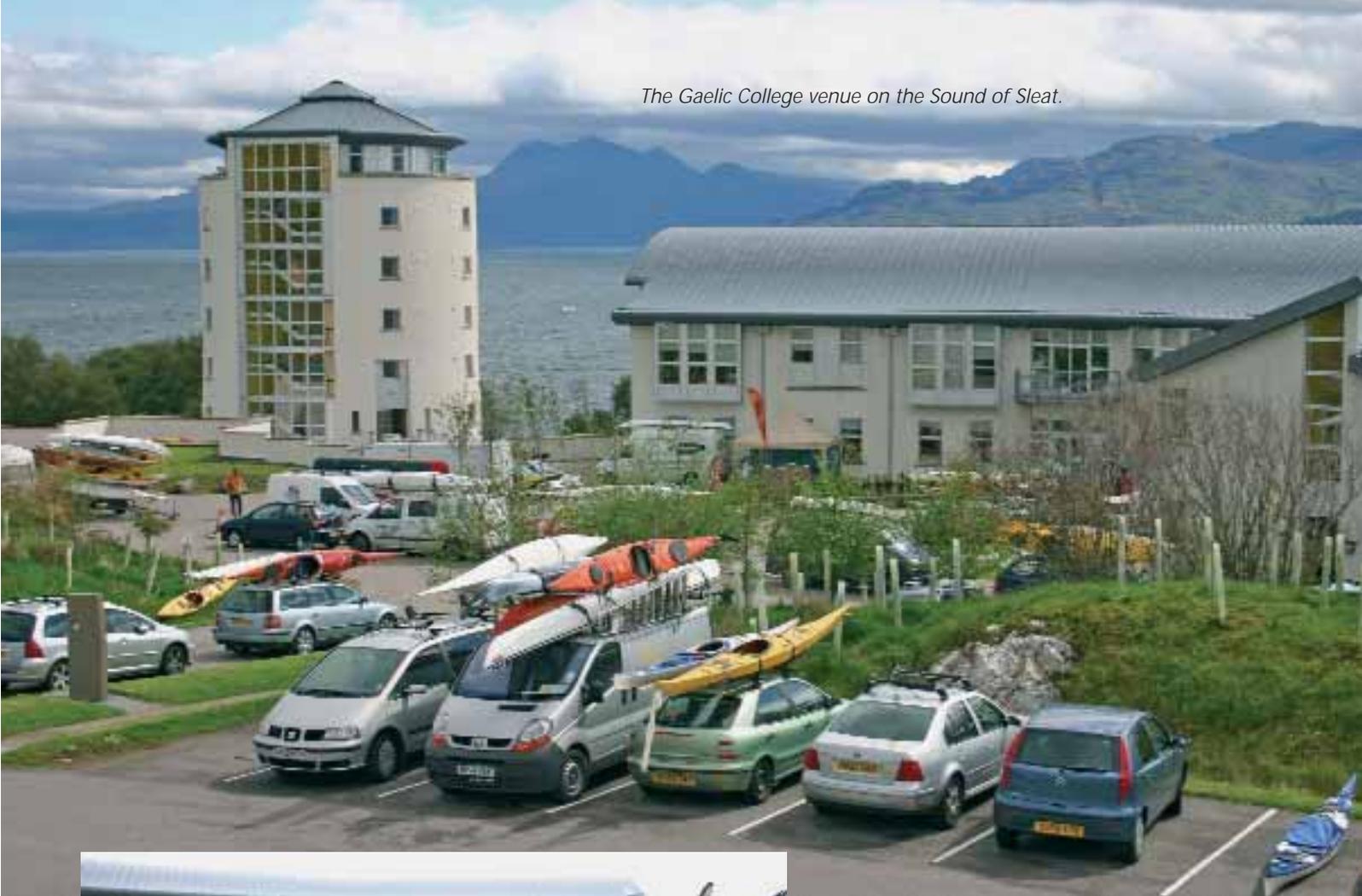
Look at the names in that list and you'll see some you know. The contributors hosting the sessions were all top notch. Of the twenty six Level Five sea coaches in the UK only three were not present, according to the organizers. This symposium has a reputation for attracting the best which perhaps explains why the one hundred and sixty delegate places sold out months ahead of time. That's a lot of sea kayakers and when the exhibitors were included plus all the partners, relatives and children who tagged along it added up to two hundred and sixty people in one place, all focused on sea kayaking. Rarely have I been among so many friendly, like minded people. It says a lot that we all could leave wet kit out overnight, hanging from roof racks and not a thing went missing.

The Gaelic College proved once again to be an excellent venue, providing hearty meals for hungry paddlers and excellent learning



Traders' display area.

The Gaelic College venue on the Sound of Sleat.



Organizers Gordon and Morag Brown, Ken Nichol and Duncan Winning.



Multiple choice questions.



Sean Morley tells them firsthand.



The campsite for the hardened types.



Andy Stamp, discovery learning.



facilities. More on site accommodation would have been nice but the campsite or swamp as it became known was not as bad as it sounds. The beach access was awkward, down a steep track that became churned, slippery mud, and there was the inevitable delay when fifty sea kayakers attempt to launch from the same, small rocky beach at the same time but no one to whom I spoke felt these minor complaints detracted from the overall success of the weekend.

Experts always make it look easy and by now the organizers of this event really are experts. Somehow they manage to create an informal, casual atmosphere and yet keep events running to a complex timetable. Don't underestimate this. If things were too laid back then nothing would ever happen. People who had to spend a long time hanging about waiting for sessions to start would grumble and push off to do their own thing. Alternatively, had the organizers gone around with blowing whistles and ringing bells, demanding people went to their session *now*, then the result would probably have been the same; delegates would have grumbled, pushed off and gone paddling. Achieving this balance is the hidden yet fundamental success of the whole event.

What's more, they created an environment in which everyone could learn something. For some people it was rolling; others picked up subtle boat handling skills but best of all were the absolutely priceless nuggets of knowledge we could pick up almost without trying. I'll give you an example. On a multi day trip many people take a frozen dinner for the first day or two. Howard Jeffs just happened to mention he froze his meals in a poly bag, packed inside the pan in which they'll be used so they fit the pan perfectly. He stores them in an insulated tube, shaped around the pan from a roll of sleeping mat to which ends have been attached, a simple and effective expedition technique.



The busy launch site on the Sound of Sleat. It could take as much as 50 minutes to get everyone afloat.





Stac Pollaidh eventually manages to find a parking place.



Franco Ferrero's absolutely bombproof way of getting back into the boat, especially in shallow water.

DERRICK

Simon Willis photographs



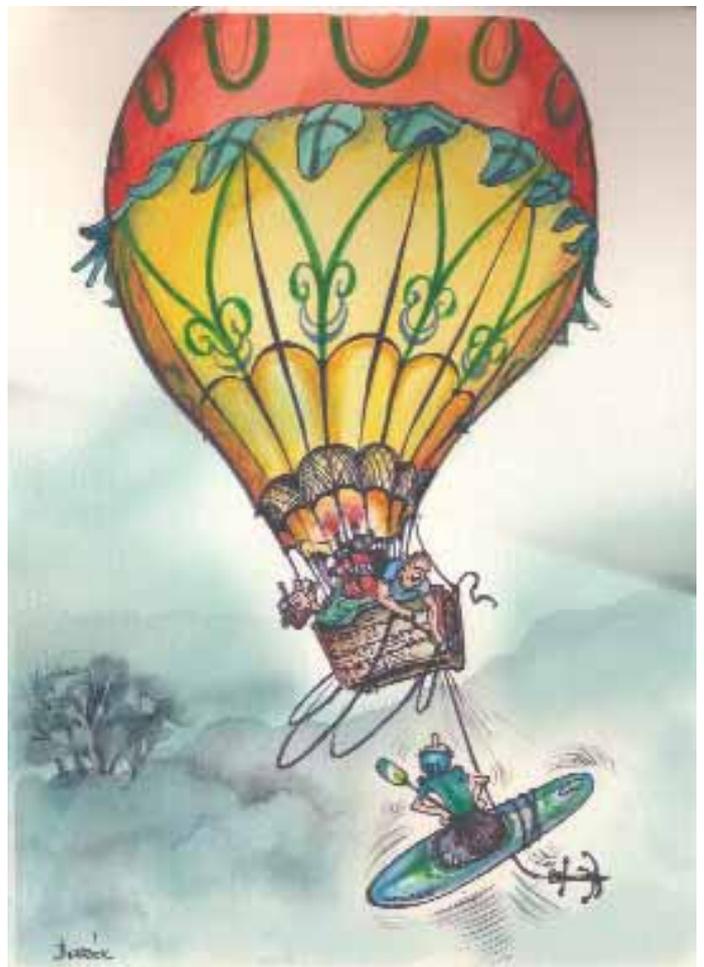
The highlight of my weekend was having a re entry roll demonstrated to me for the first time by Franco Ferrero and then, after several attempts, succeeding in performing the manoeuvre. Probably even more useful was learning his 'absolutely bombproof way' of getting himself back in his kayak, using a water bag (or inflatable paddlefloat). This he slipped onto his split paddle which he wedged under decklines just behind the cockpit where it sat at right angles to the boat as an outrigger. The water bag, slightly inflated, provided buoyancy and a counterbalance weight. Now that is something I'm going to go away and practise.

The other aspect I enjoyed was meeting so many people who share the same interest. We drive past each other and we know folk in clubs but with more than two hundred sea kayakers in one place we were bound to make friends. Chances are, we would bump into old friends, too, and I shared my first practical session with four people I hadn't seen for more than a year.

Families were well provided for with a floating crèche run by the team from Whitewave. On the first day they looked after seventeen youngsters whose ages ranged from five to twelve, taking them open boating on a sheltered loch and bringing them back soaked but deliriously happy.

The weekend was rounded off with a chance to experience the scenario we all hope will never happen, firing a flare and having the coastguard helicopter swoop down and hover overhead. This was a chance for the brave to experience the full force of a downdraft from rotor blades and the opportunity for the pilot to play blow football with kayakers. In short, it was a great weekend.

Simon Willis



At a quick guess, Sir, I would put us over the Dingle peninsula!

Moods My first grade V

'Get up, ya lazy bums,' came the voice from the darkness. It was Pete. We'd all slept in, if you can call 7.35am sleeping in.

We had driven up to Nethy Bridge hostel just northeast of Aviemore after work on Friday night and had booked ourselves into the flat which is joined onto the end of the hostel. These were rather luxurious surroundings when we're normally used to a cold bleak tent.

We had our weekend aimed at the Findhorn, one of the finest white water rivers in Britain according to the guidebooks. A quick breakfast of Frosties and we were off in the car towards Dulsie Bridge, the beginning of the upper section.

Gary, the third paddler in our team, had been to the Findhorn once before and had a bit of an epic on the first rapid above the bridge. However, the river was in spate then but unfortunately this weekend there hadn't been much rain and we knew that the river would be quite low. However, Gary felt that he had some straightening out to do.

We arrived at the bridge at 8.45 and, as we had expected, the river was quite low. 'It looks easy,' said Gary. A brief look at the rapid and a short discussion made our minds up. It has to be the lower section today. We jumped back into the car and drove round to Randolph's Leap, 'a beauty spot, and the place where Randolph, one of Bruce's Lieutenants at Bannockburn, is reputed to have jumped across the river while fleeing from one of his (Scottish) enemies' to quote from the guidebook.

We walked down the leafy path past a stone which supposedly marks the high water level from a flood of 1912 and stood gobsmacked at what lay beneath us. The water flowed into a narrow cleft with a nasty looking undercut on the left. The rest of it followed a narrow gorge 3 ft wide and eventually over a 3 - 4 ft drop to easier water.

Inevitably the discussions started to flow.

'Well, it looks possible.'

'It's different to the last time I was here.'

'It looks about grade III.'

'Sh...'

On closer inspection the dangers started to appear.

'Definitely a V.'

Pete decided there and then that he was going to shoot it. Gary said 'Well, I'll follow you.' I just kept quiet. We inspected the rapid from every angle and discussed the protection we would need. I didn't want to say that I was going to shoot it, even though in the back of my mind I knew I really wanted to. I didn't want to use up any of my adrenalin reserves I knew would start to empty as soon as I committed myself.

Once again we jumped back into the car and drove to Forres for fuel and a look at the egress. The drive back to Randolph's Leap was done with very few words as everyone in his own way worked out the line he was going to take. The silence was broken with fits of laughter as *Wipe-Out* bellowed out of the car stereo. Was this a sign? We all got geared up in our own ways. The smell of baby talc lingered in the air from the dusting on our dry cags. I was still desperately trying to keep control of my fears and concentrate on protecting the rapid for Pete and Gary who I knew had to go first.

We dropped our boats at a large eddy just where the river narrows to four feet. While Pete prepared himself, Gary and I went and set up the protection. I was positioned on the edge of the foam filled cleft on a fixed line close enough so that in event of a pinning I would be able to pull the boat free. That was the idea, anyway. Gary was attached to another rope, ready to jump in if Pete was washed into the undercut.

Suddenly Pete appeared and broke out into an eddy just before a short dogleg which led to the cleft. Gary and I were as ready as we were going to be and Pete looked at us. The thumbs went up and he started paddling towards us. He broke out again just above the main drop where we were both standing. A few fine adjustments and he

paddled into the foam. There was a loud clatter from his Schlegels and his boat hitting the rocks. He disappeared until only his helmet protruded from the white water.

'A bit of a mystery move that. A bit of a mystery move that,' kept going through my head for some reason. Pete popped back up, a brace off the rock wall and he was through.

Pete had made it look quite easy and it was at this point that I decided that I was going to shoot it. Immediately I could feel the adrenalin start to flow. Gary and Pete walked back to the other boats as Gary needed help with his neoprene deck. I was left standing, staring at the cleft. The butterflies in my stomach were trying to escape via my throat and mouth. Pete returned and I tried smiling at him without letting him know how I felt.

Pete attached himself to the rope and before we knew it Gary was in the eddy before the dogleg. Again the thumbs went up. Gary took a line a little right of Pete's. His boat and paddle seemed to make a louder clatter than Pete's but he popped back up and paddled triumphantly away from the cleft. My adrenalin was at boiling point now as I knew it was my turn.

'Well, are you doing it?' Pete asked.

'Yes,' I said, rather reluctantly.

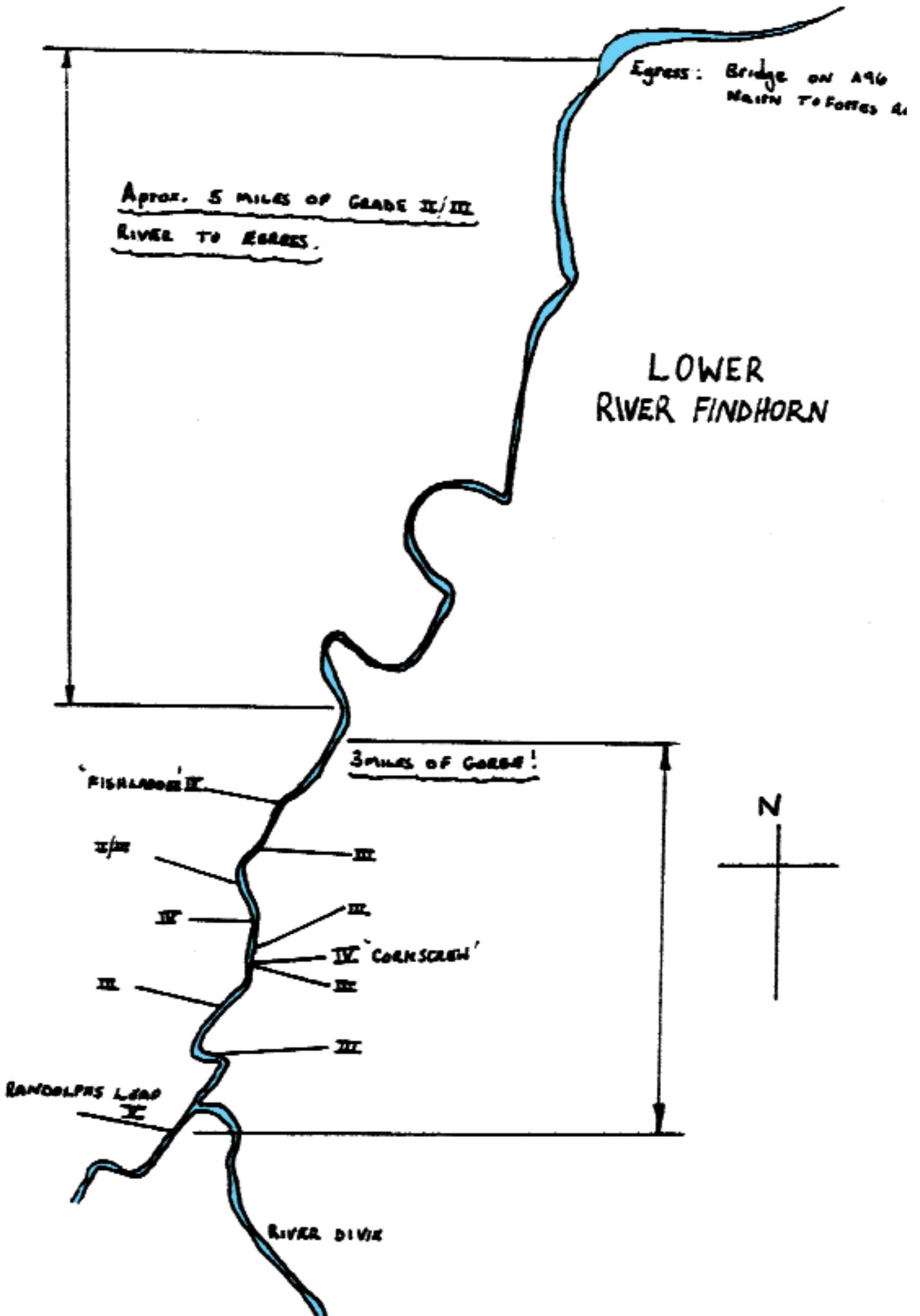
I climbed out of the gorge and started walking back to where my boat lay. On the way I checked my line down to the eddy. 'Keep left all the way,' I told myself. The section before the dogleg was about grade III and this worried me as I knew Pete and Gary wouldn't be able to see me until I broke out into the eddy. This meant that if I had any problems on the way they wouldn't realize until it was too late. I could feel the sweat running down my back as I reached my boat.

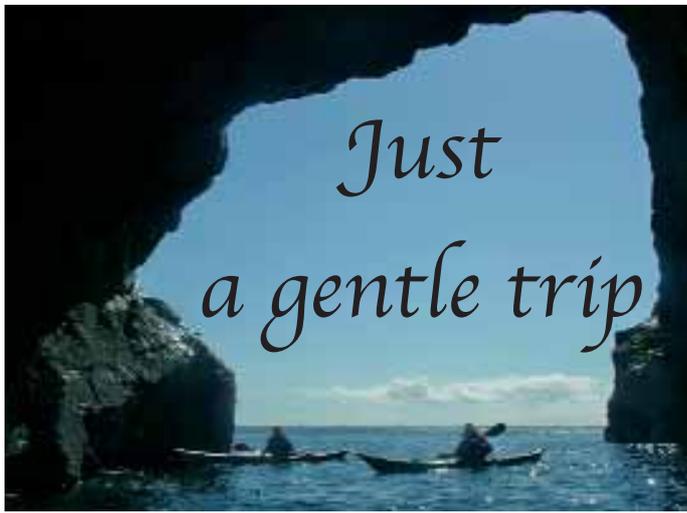
I took a few deep breaths and pulled my boat down to the water's edge. I placed it rather precariously between two rocks and climbed in. 'Spit,' I told myself. I'd heard from one of my friends, Tom, that according to one of Nealy's books if we cannot spit before a rapid we shouldn't do it. My spraydeck went on easier than I had expected and I launched into the eddy. At this point I had a severe case of the Lack of Bottle Syndrome. A few more deep breaths and I paddled through the narrowing to the start of the section. Before I knew it I was sitting in the eddy upstream of the dogleg. Pete and Gary smiled at me. I splashed my face with the water to try and get used to it. The water stung my face and my hands felt numb. The thumbs went up for the last time and I paddled to the small eddy above the main drop. It's funny how hard easy breakouts are when we must make them. I turned myself round in the eddy and faced Pete and Gary. In the back of my head I could hear them mumbling something to me; what it was was immaterial as all my thoughts were on the drop in front of me. I paddled forwards; the water sucked me towards the slot. Before I knew it and before I really wanted it to, the water took me into the foam. A few seconds seemed to pass and I realized I was pinned with the water gushing into my face. The next second I was thrown towards the side of the gorge. I braced against it and paddled away, not realizing totally what had actually happened. I heard a whoop of joy behind me as I paddled into the slack water.

On recollection, later, I surprised myself how calm I was while I was pinned although it was only for two seconds. I could feel the water whistling past my ears and gushing into my chest but this didn't bother me as I felt as though I could breathe. I still cannot remember whether my eyes were opened or closed but, like an out of body experience, I seemed to hover over myself and could not only see my boat's position in the water but I could see the rock that was holding the end of it.

I climbed out of my boat in the eddy and went to help Gary and Pete coil up the ropes. We packed up our boats and prepared ourselves for the rest of the river. Not to spoil anyone's enjoyment of the rest of the river I'm going to end here but I will give a few words of advice. Most of the rapids in the gorge are straightforward but watch out for Fishladder rapid. It's worth a look. As for Randolph's Leap itself and to quote again from the guidebook, 'The falls are run at V+ but are dangerous and best avoided by the sane'.

Clifford Lowther





To have paddled around St Kilda, Hirta and all the stacks in 2004 (Sep, p14) was just amazing and I am still high as a kite over the whole experience. To organize another expedition was risky and being a hostage to fortune is even riskier, hence a wild west trip, and, as the whole crew were realistically optimistic and philosophical over destinations and aims, it was, for me, a huge relief. Although I was quietly confident of good luck and in our skipper and the *Dundarg*, the pressure was still on.

It would be excellent to be the first sea kayakers out there this year; the sense of achievement would be enormous; even after five trips out there, arrival is marvellous feeling, especially as memories of previous trips flooded back.

Friday evening brought forecasts of strong easterlies and doubts started to filter in a little; the main goal might not be achievable. As easterlies are impossible out there, no landings, no anchorages for vessels, the window would be tight.

Friday evening saw a small band of diverse, chilled out yet enthusiastic paddlers gather in Oban on the north pier. Expectations were fuelled by ambitions of reaching this mythical land so far away. As with all expeditions, finding the balance of challenge is tricky; when we complicate it with two queuing low pressure systems it makes life even more uncertain.

After unloading shed loads of gear, stowing it on the *Dundarg* and having our first beer, relaxation hit as the boat rolled happily on the pier; you would not have thought any wind was out there. An early departure was planned and sleep came fitfully as excitement grew.

Hiding from the gales

Saturday morning brought gales from the northeast and a swell to match. Two boats ploughed out into the teeth of it, crews and skippers alike taking the battering; we opted for the known shelter of Loch Sunart and its fine wee islands and picturesque coastline. This turned out to be a sensible decision; even though the other dive boats had reached the Outer Hebrides they were feeling very sorry for themselves. We were only five hours behind, comfortable and had a great paddle down Sunart, exploring Oransay and hidden cuts in the many islands.

An evening in Tobermory always goes down well. A sheltered haven, it was as welcoming as ever; however, minds weren't really on the pub but on the next day and conditions. Still a little too close to home to really relax, the next day would see us out beyond Harris and then we would be getting there.



Di Waddell off Boreray.

Rising pressure, rising spirits

An easing forecast and developing high pressure system lifted spirits and calmed our and especially my nerves.

To reach and get through the Sound of Harris seemed the best option and then we had choices of where to head. There is so much scope up the west coast of Harris and Lewis; alternatives not just poor substitutes abound.



The team on Taransay.

Taransay glimmered in the evening sunlight; golden beaches washed by emerald seas beckoned us



ashore. We had a great time on an unusual refracting wave off a sand bar; small waves rolled over the shallow bar and, for a while, provided us with entertainment and surf practice in more uncertain conditions. Landing on unspoilt beaches is always a wonderful occasion. Richard produced fine claret, nibbles and a huge grin, which spoke volumes. With uplifted spirits a sense of optimism surged through the team as Lady Luck was with us.

Back on board, we were subjected to huge plates of wonderful home cooking but begging Liz to reduce portions sizes had no effect; we just gave in and succumbed to weight increase and a training regime once home again.

Ten red sunburnt faces combined with the warmth of the galley conspired to heavy sleep sensations and, with the buzz of a possible run out and back to the edge of the world, the evening was complete with a classic sunset.

We anchored for the night off this now famous jewel of an island. Rocked to sleep by a gentle slop and roll of the silent waves on the hull, we were abruptly awakened by the thud of the generator at 0530. We set sail for St Kilda; forty five miles away on the edge of the world lay our goal.

Would it be wrapping into Village Bay?

If the gods favoured our little red ship then we would stay there; if not, we would leave and run back to shelter. Either way, we were going out and the excitement grew rapidly.

Gannets indicated land, skuas eyed up our enormous lunches and the occasional puffin struggled to keep up. Thirty five miles off, we had our first sighting, Boreray always seen first, closely followed by Hirta and the stacks, yet thirty five miles away is a long time to get excited over a paddle in one of the most dramatic settings anywhere in the world and, as the reality dawned that we were going to paddle there, thoughts were now moved to where and how long?

Ten foot swell trains rolled us beam on and doubt started to filter in. NE swell ran off over the horizon line, not powerful but long travelled; would it be wrapping into Village Bay? Would we be able to stay? Would we be able to paddle?

As we approached Boreray it was evident that

Saturday: Steamed Oban to Loch Sunart. Paddled to Oransay via Loch Teacuis.

Sunday: Tobermory to Taransay. Paddled along Taransay coast.

Monday: Taransay to St Kilda via Boreray. To Village Bay. Paddled Village Bay, through Dun Gap and along west coast of Hirta.

Tuesday: Paddled west Coast of Hirta to Soay and its Stacks. Coasted and jumped off Stack Dona. Steamed to Carbost, Skye.

Wednesday: Gales, loch bound.

Thursday: Paddled around Wiay. Steamed to Oban, visited Canna.

Friday: Paddled in Firth of Lorne and NW coast of Lismore.

we weren't going anywhere off the stacks as huge swell lines exploded in the deep caves that litter the vertical coastlines. Deceptive in scale, these waves were filling very large holes!

We could have paddled along the west side; a short 'done it' paddle would have been the result, emphasizing to me just how blessed we were the year before to have paddled right around. Familiarity breeds but out there it keeps us firmly on the boat! But this 'done it' attitude would have not been satisfying; time is needed out here to view and soak up the sublime scenes. Village Bay would offer this and possibilities of hidden calm.



Village Bay, St Kilda.

Village Bay was smooth with a slight wave rolling in; three other boats were anchored and radio chat confirmed our stay would be shortlived.

Snatching anything out there is a bonus, to paddle beneath the cliffs and through its geos a chance of a lifetime.

The nature of the place creates an added rush and seriousness of making the right decisions. The scale drowns out small shore waves; what looks like small slop may end up being large surging water. In Village Bay options were limited as the north and east coasts were a non starter but would the shelter of the remoter and wildest west coast be feasible?

Access to the west coast of Hirta and Dun comes in three ways. The awesome geos or the Dun Gap. These sawcuts are like doors into another world; they bar entry to most, either by swell or by tide levels. Once through, a barrier of cliff appears, grander than any other scene in Britain.

Increasing ENE swell ploughed into the bay; having paddled over and decided that the swell might not allow us back again and as it smacked through the boulders we headed off for the SE tip of Hirta through flocks of puffins, thousands of them all quizzically watching us and only escaping underwater at the very last moment in comical disgust.

Rounding the point changed the atmosphere, deep troughs appeared and kayakers disappeared! A taste of this was fine; like fine whisky, we only need a small amount to be happy. 4 miles off, Boreray seemed to fall off the world; a couple of glances at each other confirmed an explore ashore for some of the team.



The Dun Gap and Earle Wilson on his way.

Earle, Richard and I paddled back over to the geos for another look; would they be passable? No, no way; one wrong timed wave and we would have been crushed against steep cut walls. However, after deciding not to go to through the Dun Gap we managed to sneak through and into a paradise of calm, clear water. Two hours of paddling and exploring the gigantic caves was enough to fuel the adrenalin and plan for the next day.

If the weather held we would be back there very early in the morning before the next front came through; to miss this opportunity would be so unfair for the shore party.

The ubiquitous visit to the out of place Puff Inn is always obligatory but only after a walk ashore and over the hill to watch the sunset over Soay does it feel allowed. The need to escape the intrusion of modern life is absolute; to sit quietly and soak up the atmosphere of such remote places is a privilege. The sun set gently over Soay and with it came a cold breeze from the north; fortune cut into the skin.

The most risky part of the expedition was to come, climbing the ladder. Back down in the Puff Inn we signed the roof and proudly hung up a T shirt. Signed by all the crew, it hangs high up above the chatting visitors.

Blown away by the sheer scale of the cliffs

A crisp early morning followed with a freshening breeze and anticipation of another trip along the west coast to Soay ran through our nervous systems. Being vessel supported we had our ride to the far side, to a calm and promised seascape. Having not been there, the crew was blown away by the sheer scale of the cliffs, dumbfounded by scale and drama. Having walked along the cliff tops and standing by the Lover's Stone, looking down only amplifies the difficulty of working out scale here and just how exposed it is, emphasized by lack of seabirds nesting.

Clarity of sound and sea's surface reflecting the rising sun added to the contrasting pinks of the deep caves. Clearer than the previous trips, inside the cauldrons were less hazy, less cold and no mist as we entered the cathedral like space, each in our own imaginations of the past and present, insignificant here amongst the grandeur.

Exploring everything takes time and time really does go so fast when we're excited and ever so slightly tense. It does this to us out there; the situation is so intense and I know no other place quite like it for atmosphere and no other place that humbles us quite as much, either.

Soay loomed beyond but, having been there before, the speed of the stacks' appearing shocked me. The sentinels, as last year, captivated our vision.

The towering gates to the other side of the archipelago, to the north and east coasts, barred our passage comfortably. Two and half knots of tide and a howling NE wind hungrily waited beyond. We happily remained on the west, content to watch the maelstrom beyond from glassed waters.

One of our objectives for this trip was to coasteer and to cliff jump off any of the mighty stacks.

I have to admit it was the most awesome place I have ever jumped off a sea cliff. The tide pulling towards Soay Sound combined with the rush of the waves under the stacks created a natural but unusual sense of fear! Even more frightening than taking off on a big wave at Thurso East, the commitment bounced through my head as we dived off the boat and swam for the safety of the rock walls. Only then did we realize the loneliness of our position, exaggerated by going first and it being a first.



Di Waddell, Soay Sound.

Luckily, easy egress onto the stack was found and being perched 30 feet above the sea with the whole of Boreray behind just added to the sense of place, of sensation and adrenalin. It seems silly, really, such a theoretically easy thing to do creating such an emotion of excitement. I am still whirling with the experience. We have jumped much bigger cliffs and shallower water but nothing will beat those drops.

Slipping away from the archipelago left us wanting more, more time, more paddling and more adventures. For such a short distance of paddling the whole experience feels so huge, the distance paling into



The west coast of Hirta.

Leaving St Kilda.

Andy Sprink, Earle Wilson and Liz Deam photographs

insignificance compared with the drama of the location. John, the skipper, confirmed that only approximately one in five times can we even be on the west coast of Hirta let alone journey in sea kayaks or dive. I crashed out, content that everyone had been and paddled and explored and smiled. I slept well as all were safe, well and away in their own worlds.

On the roof of the wheelhouse in the sunshine before drifting off, I caught a glimpse of James looking back to Boreray; this was, especially for him, a chance of a lifetime. Having never sea kayaked before, he had achieved what a lot only dream of and only a few ever will achieve.

The second half of our journey was beginning; eight hours of steaming saw us back into the Cope Passage and heading for Loch Maddy; however, the lump of weather for which we had been waiting was upon us. 'The plan is there is no plan!' seemed to be the philosophy of the trip and plans change at sea rapidly; without a flexible approach, disappointment could be as huge as the escape itself.

Taking the silent suggestion

Skye beckoned and the shelter of Carbost pier. When fishing boats come in for the day and stay for the night we know we need to stay in also. Weathered faces peered from small salt encrusted windows, cigarettes in hand and the thousand mile stares of too much boozing and too little sleep spoke of silent knowledge. The expressions of graft were etched on diesel covered skin; carefully we took the unwritten suggestion and explored Talisker distillery, warmed up in the pub and ate even more!

'What are your intermediate trips like?'

The following morning the forecast favoured a short paddle in Loch Bracadale and around Wiay. This fine wee island with high cliffs and caves into which to venture sheltered us for the most part from strong southwest winds. In the lee, summer rain bounced gently off a glassy sea; as we rounded the southern point it was a different matter, only

force 4 yet shallow reefs kicked up an awkward sea. Carefully watching each other's progress, we enjoyed the chop. James, especially, revelled in the bounce. As it was his first paddle in conditions so rough, his eyes were firmly fixed on the destination of our starting point and yet his smile grew larger with every wave, converted! He asked the question 'If this is an introduction what are your intermediate trips like?' On return, James was to buy a sea boat and book onto the Tiree Surf Gathering.

The Maidens took on a totally different personality from the calm of the evening before. Skye's Cullin occasionally appeared through the mist and the fresh burns rushed off the sea pink and rock rose covered grass, contrasted against the grey sky like a Monet painting but Monet would have been confused by the changing character of light and conditions we experienced throughout the week. Photos hardly do it justice, painting might capture it and our memory holds it as best it can while images will filter over time.

Running before the wind

Expeditions come to an end and are often emotional times. We had to say farewell to folk in Oban as responsibilities and commitments beckoned. The four of us left spent Friday morning being blown up the north shore of Lismore at 11 kilometres an hour, a fast yet strangely calm paddle echoing the trip's feel.

Unloading is always a sombre period but memories of the experience flood back, masking the inevitable end to amazing adventures. It took months for it to sink in last year. I hope all will catch glimpses every so often of their favourite moments out there at the edge of the world.

I would like to thank *Dundarg's* skipper, John, and crew, Brian, and to Liz for fantastic food and our increased waistlines and the paddling crew for their patience, support and understanding of flexibility in such changeable conditions, I learnt a lot in a gentle way on a gentle trip.

Andy Spink paddled with Earle Wilson, Claire Knifton, Di Waddell, Melissa Cheshire, Richard Hathway and James Dean. They plan to organize a *Wild West Expedition* next May. If you are interested please contact Andy on 01631 710317.

The building of the Ark

A play detailing some Tyneside shipbuilding which we missed in last month's guide.



Noah, rugged Northumbrian, adze in hand, leans gasping on the shaft. He is around 600 years old which is knocking on a bit for a man doing vigorous things. A reporter from the local paper questions him and takes notes. His sons Shem, Ham and Japheth scud about the stage, bumping into one another, lugging bits of timber and hitting them with big mauls.

Noah: 'So ye report for the *City Press*? Ah'm afraid ye've caught us at a bad time. We hev yon Ark t' build this week an' time presses.'

Reporter: 'Is it right that the world is to come to an end? Rumours of impending doom have been heard up in the city; that your God is going to flood the place and wash it away?'

Noah: 'Ah'd not go so far as that, mind; still, a feller told us to build an Ark and quick about it. Gie'd us a week to dee it. Told us to make it 300 cubits long and if thy cubit is the same as mine from elbow to tips of fingers that's 450 feet owwer aal.'

Reporter: 'But that's twenty cricket pitches! How much timber do you need and where do you get it?'

Noah: 'We wuz tellt to use gopher wood, pal, and that's hard to come by. There's nee supplies of gopher wood in the timber yard at the city and neebody took care to grow mature timber in plantations, so we're strugglin'. We've to go-pher the stuff, which cud be anywhere, then cut it...'

Reporter: 'Down, eh? But how do you move it from where it lies to where you need it, here on this launching ramp? Must have taken a few weeks to level and put in launching ways for the hull to slide down, eh?'

Noah: 'Aye but it'll float off. Might bump a bit, mind, an' strain the hull. Y'see, it taks a month or more just to grub out the tree stumps and hoi oot the rocks. I know the lads are strong but it taks fower o' w' half a day to shift one stump. The grass ropes we use snap without mair than a sharp tug and the wives are busy twisting up new'uns aal the time.'

Reporter: 'But that doesn't answer the question, does it? When did you start?'

Noah: 'Monday.' (He mops the sweat from his honest if ancient brow.)

Reporter: 'That's today! But the ways are made, the cradles ready and in place and, blow me, the first cradle stands higher than my house!'

Noah: 'Aye, it weighs ten tons does yon cradle; we need one every twenty feet That's twenty cradles or 2,000 tons o' timber just for the building frames. But its this gopher wood that takks the getting. There go the lads noo for mair.'

Three men are seen sprinting off into the distance upstage pushing a wheelbarrow each. Each wheelbarrow contains a stone axe and flints for trimming the timbers. Thudding and hacking sounds are heard. They return at the run, wheelbarrows laden.

Noah: 'Hoo far d'ye gan, lads?'

Shem: 'Twenty leagues, Dad.'

Noah: 'You took 25 seconds, mind, an' ye'll need to find, cut down, trim, fetch and fit a ton o' timber every minute, day and night for the seven days we hev to do it. Move! Or we'll aal droon.'

Reporter: 'That's a bit hard, isn't it? Ton of timber every minute, in place, fitted?' Does quick mental calculation. 'That's twenty thousand tons!'

Noah: 'Aye, it's hard but we hev divine assistance. One thing, this gopher wood smells lovely, better than yon Japheth's aftershave.'

Japheth: 'Watch it, Dad. Just 'cos ye're aald duzzent give yer saucy rights. Aa's nee bairn still. Aa's fowwer hunderd, thaa knaas.'

Shem: 'Dad. This gopher wood's lovely stuff but this keel ah'm laminatin' up from short overlappin' strips is splittin' summat awful. That glue you had Mum make from camel dung and fowl droppings isn't much good, to tell the truth, and these grass bindings keep snapping. Let's see, the drawings specify a length owwer aal of 450 feet and, allowing its a barge, the keel should be 400 feet long and six feet square. With gopher wood lengths of 30 feet and twelve inches square, ah's gan to need, er, darn, ah need new batteries for the calculator; that's 192,000 lengths just for the keel, Dad. Dad?'

Noah: 'Ham: hev ye made yon winder yet? Foot and a half square, mind, but if that's the only one according to these drawings there's gan to be a fair aald stench when yon animals aal climb on. Mek sure the hinges work and hinge it on the forrard edge. We divvent want watter pourin' doon the hole. Mind ye, Aa's none sure that a door in the side's a good idea. Once we're off we'll never dare open it.'

Japheth: 'How de'ye sink a city sinner's submarine, eh, Dad? Give up? Knock on the door!'

Reporter: 'Well, thank you, Noah. I can see you're busy. I'll be away now and write this up for next week's free paper. Will you take an advert? Give you half a page for a swift shekel? Two million circulation?'

Noah: 'Aye, well, thanks, bonny lad. No, next week we'll be long gone, owwer the seas. De ye hev a raincoat? It's gan to be awful wet varry soon. Gud day to ye.'

The curtain falls to the sound of renewed hammering and sawing noises as Noah is heard to say:

'Now whaar's me powwa' saw? What's that? Neebody invented petrol yet? Aa divven' knaa hoow we'll get this thing built on time. Shem! What's Hawthorn Leslie's Hebborn number? Or Palmer's o' Jarrer? An' if they're owwer busy, try Friar's Goose slipway; they can do owt there and reasonable, too. Oars or paddles, too. Collar's o' Oxford? Why, man, they're a canny way off. We'll hev to makk 'em.'

Alan Byde

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Andy Hamilton and Rob Wylie racing for Britain at Holme Pierrepont.

Schofield snatches a first win

River Trent WWR

The World Cup series has traditionally seen several races spread around Europe, then a month's gap, followed by the finals, an arrangement particularly unfair for non European competitors. John Handyside, aided and abetted by Ben Sandiford of the USA, with whom he had launched the concept back in 1983, proposed and ran something different, six races in a fortnight, closely grouped in time and geographically in England, Ireland and Wales. Twenty nations entered although numbers were to build up over the fortnight as not everyone could make the whole series. For the locals there was the novelty of being able to go

back to work between races if they didn't need to learn the courses. Only the Irish were inconvenienced, needing to come to Britain twice, but it was less difficult than going to the Continent twice and they had the compensation of having Handyside running everything.

The first event was the River Trent sprint, run on the Holme Pierrepont slalom course, a run which favours left handed C1s as they cleared the Muncher and run down the wall. The top half of the course had been improved with more glassfibre rocks to give increased water activity.

Practice was not pleasant, competitors having to face a strong and



*C1 winner Vladi Panato of Italy.
Jennifer and Sandra Hyslop at Holme Pierrepont.*





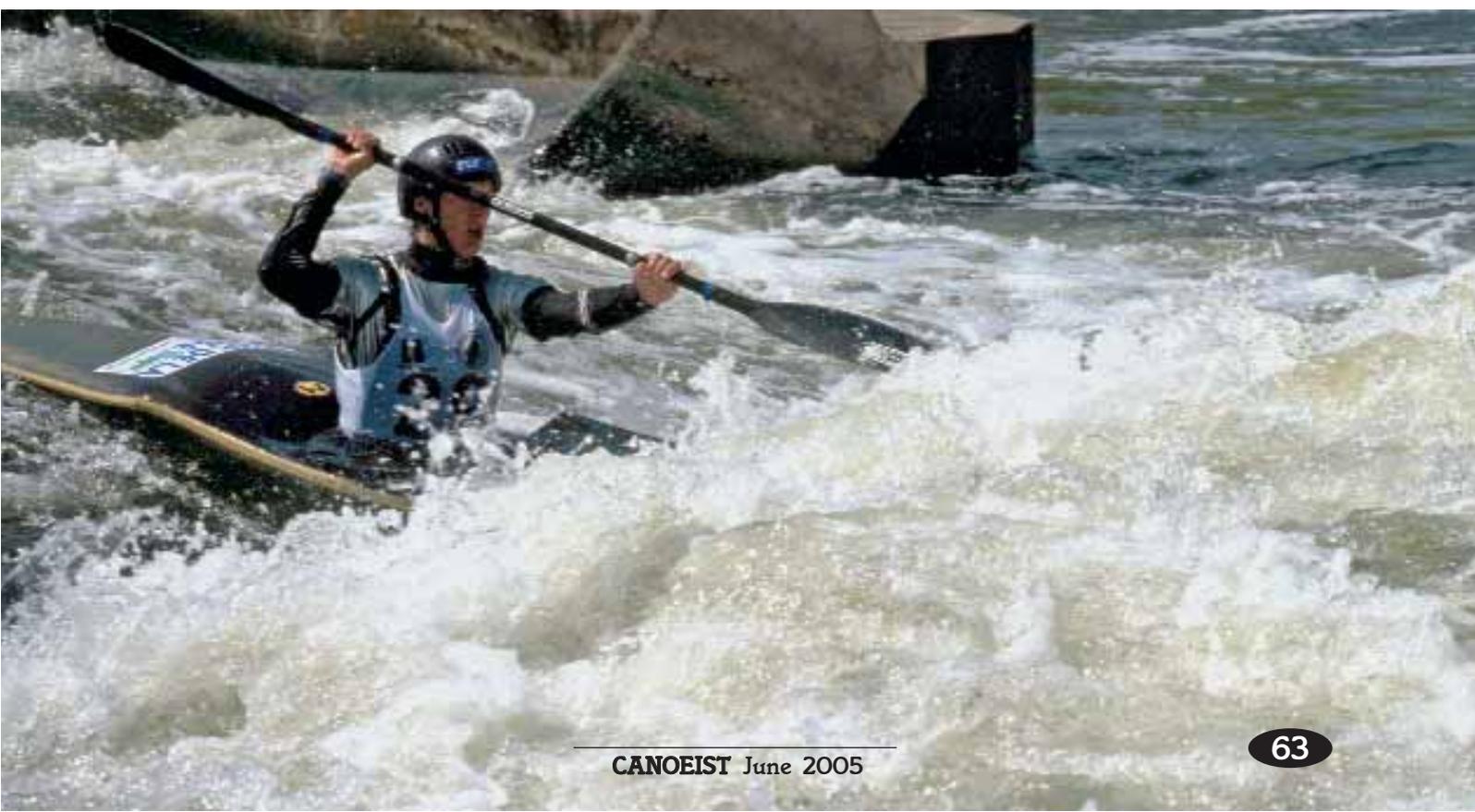
Dee Paterson approaches the Looping Pool.



Gilly Mara broken out.



*Jessica Oughton took Britain's best women's result at Nottingham.
Nathalie Leclerc was the women's winner.*





Rob Pumphrey/Dave Bradburn and Simon Wright/Jamie Christie racing for Britain.



The amazing Irish pair, Wesley Bourke registered blind and Donal MacIntyre never having been in a C2 before. The only time Iain and Andy Clough have ever swum in a race during a long racing career.





Frederic Momot/Michael Didier taking their first win of the series for France.

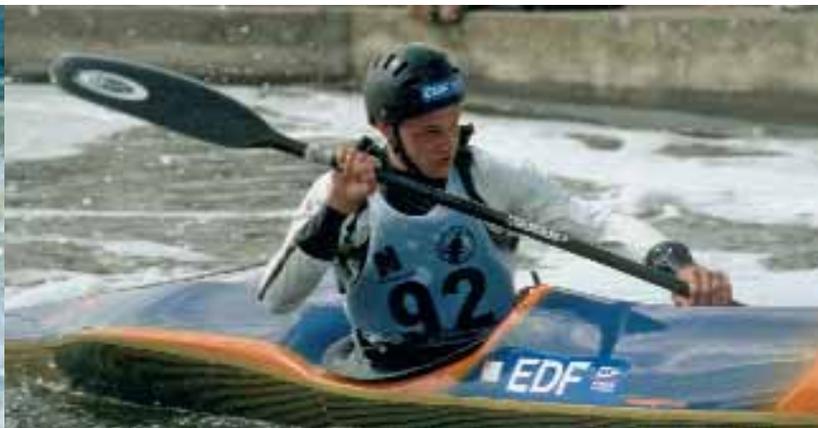
cold headwind. For the race, it relented, the sun came out and conditions were ideal, together with a mellow commentary which contrasted with the usual hype heard at this venue and others of its ilk.

The C1s were the first class away but they came to a sudden halt after the first two. Timing was being done by the Hounslow, using

the slalom timing equipment, and they hadn't appreciated that starts needed to be at exactly 1 minute intervals, not approximately as in slalom. Once that had been sorted, normal service was resumed but Tadhg Macintyre threw in some cross bow strokes so that slalomists didn't feel rejected. Slalomist Andy Hamilton put down a 10th place



German challengers Christian Andree/Patrick Driesch.



Top French racer Arnaud Hybois.



Martyn Steele and Michael Mason into the Looping Pool.



Mustafa Sahin about to roll but enjoying himself.

for Britain on first runs but Rob Wylie had a problematic first run. Not so Vladi Panato, taking a 0.4 second lead for Italy once again.

Nathalie Leclerc took a 1.6 second lead for France in K1. Directly behind her was Gilly Mara, who broke out. Jessica Oughton hit the rock above the Looping Pool head on but was able to recover to be within 10 seconds of Leclerc. The Hyslop sisters, in their first senior World Cup, and Dee Paterson raced soundly to be towards the bottom of the short field after a panic repair to her paddles which came apart before the start.

Grant Anderson, Peter Keron and Richard Forbes.



The most amazing performance of all came in C2 from Wesley Bourke, registered blind with very limited vision, and investigative journalist Donal Macintyre, who had never been in a C2 before. They were assisted by other members of the Irish team running down the bank and shouting at them where to turn. The other surprise came from the Cloughs. Andy dropped his paddle at the Looping Pool and they swam, something they have never done before in a long racing career. The French boats of Momot/Didier and Leblond/Silloto were comfortably in the lead with Wright/Christie, Pumphrey/Bradburn and the Irish pair bringing up the rear.

The Irish men's kayaks included two Devizes to Westminster Race K2 winners from the last three years, Richard Hendron and Jim Morrisey, the latter enjoying a last burst of freedom before becoming a dad in June, both to be near the back of the field. Michael Morrisey swam, allowing South Africa's Craig Mustard to claim a rerun. Another swimmer on each run was Mustapha Sahin, a welcome representative of Turkey. Grant Anderson was back in action after 18 months off the water with reactive arthritis, believed to have been caused by food poisoning. He was 0.03 sec behind Richard Forbes, the pair within 3 seconds of first run leader Nejc Znidarcic. Jonnie Schofield put in a very competent first run to place himself comfortably in the top three, just 1.01 seconds off the pace with 0.13 second to make up on Arnaud Hybois.

Second runs saw Panato pick up a second for a win, Hamilton holding onto 10th and Wylie producing a much more respectable performance although he had too much to do to get far clear of the bottom.

Mara capsized but Oughton had a clean run, 1.5 seconds faster than before for 9th place while the Hyslop sisters both improved to follow her in the results. Paterson broke out for the slowest run of all but it only cost her one place. Meanwhile, the serious action was with the two French Nathalies, Leclerc just holding the lead after going a couple of seconds slower.

The C2s were to see no change in order for the whole class, including another successful run for the Irish pair.

Forbes was to rule himself out of K1 with a swim and Anderson was a couple of seconds down for a final 17th place, Keron, Mason and Steele finishing between 21st and 26th. Having produced the fastest run of the day the first time, Znidarcic dropped 1.2 seconds. Hybois improved but was still 0.3 second off what he needed. Carlo Mercati and Florian Wohlers had been 2.5 seconds off the pace the first time so they were probably out of contention, as it was to prove. This left Robert Pontarollo with 1.6 seconds to find and Schofield to find a second. Schofield pounded down and there was a long pause after an urgent call for the repair crew. The finish light beam had been knocked. After an agonizing delay the time came through, a 0.95 second improvement, giving a 0.14 second lead over Znidarcic. Pontarollo could not produce the goods so Schofield had landed his first World Cup win and the enthusiastic approbation of the largely British crowd. It was the start we needed.



Men's K1 winner Jonnie Schofield.

K1W: 1 N Leclerc, France, 2:37.73. 2 N Gastineau, France, 2:37.97. 3 S Fuessler, Deutschland, 2:40.72. 9 J Oughton, GB, 2:53.57. 10 S Hyslop, GB, 3:02.12. 11 J Hyslop, GB, 3:03.71. 12 D Paterson, GB, 3:23.30. **K1M:** 1 J Schofield, GB, 2:21.47. 2 N Znidarcic, Slovenija, 2:21.61. 3 A Hybois, France, 2:21.89. 17 G Anderson, GB, 2:28.15. **C1:** 1 V Panato, Italia, 2:34.51. 2 T Hohnjec, Hrvatska, 2:36.05. 3 I Gojic, Hrvatska, 2:38.63. 10 A Hamilton, GB, 2:52.91. 14 R Wylie, GB, 3:13.96. **C2:** 1 Momot/Didier, France, 2:33.00. 2 Leblond/Silloto, France, 3:35.99. 3 Pecek/Raus, Hrvatska, 2:41.18. 5 Wright/Christie, GB, 2:48.71. 6 Pumphrey/Bradburn, GB, 2:50.75.

The Czech kayaks arrive

Washburn WWR

The second race of the World Cup series was on the Washburn, looking its spring best with bluebells and violets along the banks amongst opening bracken and young beech leaves to offset the peaty brown water. All it needed was some sunshine, sadly lacking although the cloudy day was mild. As the first classic race it was quite short, shorter than usual as the finish was upstream of the bridge, where Yorkshire Water had laid a new path down to the river. Organizer John Handyside had been keen not to have left hand drive minibuses and trailers pulling out across the fast and relatively blind section of A59 past the normal finish carpark and so had set a course and a one way traffic system which meant they did not have to cross the road.

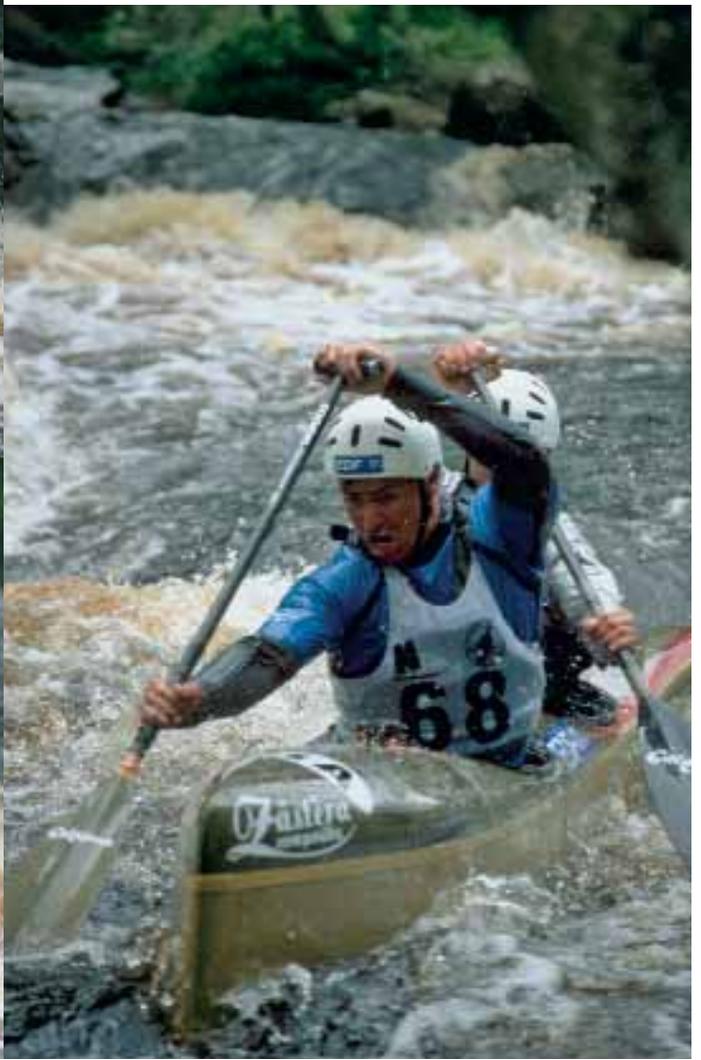


Above left: Jessica Oughton and Dee Paterson.
Right: Gilly Mara.
Below: Sandra and Jennifer Hyslop on the Washburn.





Above: The Clough brothers.
Left: Wright/Christie and Pumphrey/Bradburn.
Below: Leading French C2 Cyril Leblond/David Silloto.





Jamie Oughton on the Washburn.

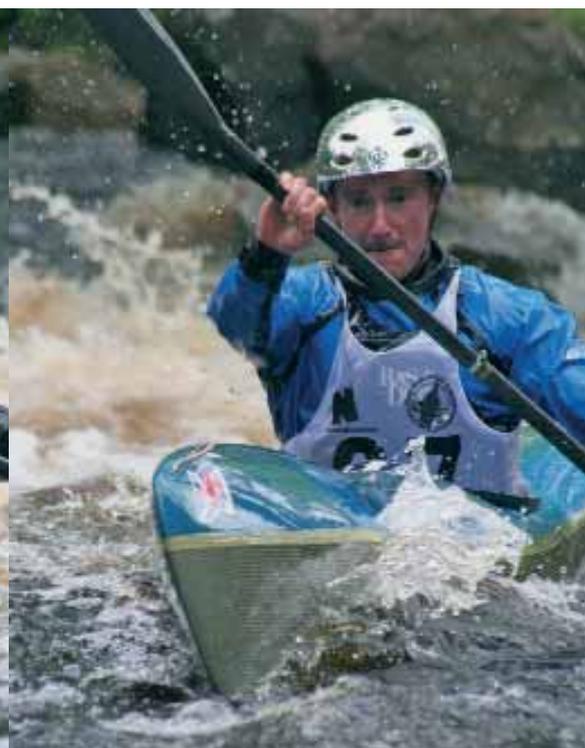
Yorkshire Water handed out bottles of their Icytonic water at the finish and a new and very positive staff member was present to view the proceedings. At one point a police vehicle arrived at the start, cast an eye over the carpark and left. How many other World Cup sports could be dismissed by the police at a glance?

The water was narrow, fast and almost continuously broken although rarely exceeding grade 2. The exception was the big drop halfway down the course. A rock at the base of the fall had washed free, leaving a metre vertical drop which banged sterns.

Vladi Panato was to be the C1 winner again, this time followed by all four of the Croatian team. Andy Hamilton and Rob Wylie were pushed back by others who found the easier course more to their liking.

The other significant change for this race was the arrival of the Czechs, Michala Strnadova whistling down for an 8 second win from Nathalie Leclerc. The only capsizes for the whole event was Carol Hurst of Australia. Dee Paterson, following, stopped to assist her before paddling on to the finish, unsure of whether she would be allowed a rerun. She was, beating all but Jessica Oughton of the British women, who were the last of the finishers.

The British C2s also brought up the rear of their class, this time including the Cloughs. Momot/Didier dropped three places but their compatriots, Leblond/Silloto, were poised for the win.



Grant Anderson and Michael Mason.

The biggest upset came in the men's K1s. Kamil Mruzek and Ales Marek took the first two places for the Czechs. Arnaud Hybois held onto 3rd for France. Jonnie Schofield, however, was less enthusiastic about the longer and less testing course, dropping 12 seconds for 13th place and slipping to 2nd place in the rankings. He was able to be philosophical about it with four races still to come, perhaps bolstered by the fact that Nejc Znidarcic dropped from a previous 2nd to 20th place.

As competitors gathered on Blubberhouses cricket pitch, a sport new to most of them, with the Yorkshire Dales rising behind, the final results were much less certain than they had been three days before, except to appreciate that the Czech kayakers were going to be key players.



Peter Keron working well on the Washburn.



Eric Jolit, another of the strong French team.

K1W: 1 M Strmadova, Ceska, 7:12.39. 2 N Lederc, France, 7:20.67. 3 A Heidrich, Deutschland, 7:23.20. 10 J Oughton, GB, 7:48.34. 12 D Paterson, GB, 8:03.22. 13 S Hyslop, GB, 8:11.97. 14 G Mara, GB, 8:25.18. 15 J Hyslop, GB, 9:39.61.
K1M: 1 K Mruzek, Ceska, 6:42.98. 2 A Marek, Ceska, 6:44.34. 3 A Hybois, France, 6:45.22. 13 J Schofield, GB, 6:54.08.
17 P Keron, GB, 6:59.02. C1: 1 V Panato, Italia, 7:26.77. 2 T Hohnjec, Hrvatska, 7:28.50. 3 E Millthram, Hrvatska, 7:30.25.
14 A Hamilton, GB, 8:23.39. 16 R Wylie, GB, 8:32.17. C2: 1 Leblond/Silloto, France, 7:29.68. 2 Andree/Driesch, Deutschland, 7:30.56. 3 Salek/Riha, Ceska, 7:30.60. 6 Wright/Christie, GB, 7:51.79. 7 Clough/Clough, GB, 7:57.24. 8 Pumphrey/Bradburn, GB, 7:58.75.



Andy Hamilton and Sandra Hyslop race the Shannon sprint event.



Gilly Mara and Dee Paterson.



*Jessica Oughton racing at Castleconnell.
Iain and Andy Clough and Simon Wright/Jamie Christie.*





Above: Jonnie Schofield winning the men's K1 event.
 Left: Grant Anderson and Peter Keron.
 Below: British women's team, Oughton, S Hysop and Paterson.

Castleconnell Wild Water Race

Sp: K1W: 1 M Strnadova, Ceska, 3:53.17. 2 N Leclerc, France, 4:01.86. 3 S Eichenberger, Schweiz, 4:02.87. 11 D Paterson, GB, 4:22.73. 14 S Hyslop, GB, 4:41.81. 15 G Mara, GB, 4:46.97. K1M: 1 J Schofield, GB, 3:33.00. 2 A Hybois, France, 3:34.89. 3 T Slovak, Ceska, 3:35.09. C1: 1 V Panato, Italia, 4:03.73. 2 I Gojic, Hrvatska, 4:09.77. 3 T Hohnjec, Hrvatska, 4:11.25. 15 A Hamilton, GB, 4:35.56. C2: 1 Salek/Riha, Ceska, 4:03.35. 2 Leblond/Silloto, France, 4:07.95. 3 Momot/Didier, France, 4:08.94. 6 Wright/Christie, GB, 4:25.29. 7 Clough/Clough, GB, 4:27.97. CI: K1W: 1 M Strnadova, Ceska, 10:22.04. 2 S Eichenberger, Schweiz, 10:37.90. 3 A Heidrich, Deutschland, 10:52.10. 11 D Paterson, GB, 11:43.63. 12 J Oughton, GB, 11:44.36. 14 S Hyslop, GB, 12:00.22. 15 G Mara, GB, 12:17.25. K1M: 1 A Hybois, France, 9:31.96. 2 K Mruzek, Ceska, 9:32.57. 3 A Marek, Ceska, 9:37.60. 17 P Keron, GB, 9:57.52. 20 R Forbes, GB, 10:03.41. C1: 1 E Milihram, Hrvatska, 11:01.65. 2 V Panato, Italia, 11:02.58. 3 S Stiefenhofer, Deutschland, 11:06.54. 13 A Hamilton, GB, 12:09.59. C2: 1 Andree/Driesch, Deutschland, 11:04.70. 2 Leblond/Silloto, France, 11:08.01. 3 Salek/Riha, Ceska, 11:08.01. 6 Wright/Christie, GB, 11:35.59. 7 Clough/Clough, GB, 11:52.03. K1WT: 1 Ceska/Schweiz, 11:04.86. 2 NZ/Australia, 11:54.82. 3 GB, 12:11.24. K1MT: 1 Ceska, 9:50.41. 2 GB, 10:04.26. 3 France, 10:05.09. 7 GB, 10:45.15. 13 Wales/Eire, 13:48.33. C2T: 1 France, 11:39.99. 2 GB/Deutschland, 12:04.83.



Schofield in medal territory

Tryweryn WWR

Keeping competitors on their toes, the weather for the final day of practice on the Tryweryn was a heatwave, the hottest recorded May day. The water was low, only 8m³/s, resulting in damaged boats and more. Vladi Panato broke his paddle and swam and one of the British masters popped his shoulder.



Rescue was by members of Bala Canoe Club, mostly using short playboats which previous canoe lifeguard championships have shown to be ineffective, not having the required volume.

Unusually, the sprint was at the lower end of the Tryweryn, including Bala Mill Fall, pleasantly testing for a sprint event, now with high water flow, to the extent that Yann Claudpierre took his hand off his C1 paddle on the fall and attempted to push off the

Bala Mill Fall pictures anticlockwise from top: Andy Hamilton, Rob Wylie, Emil Millihram of Croatia, Yann Claudepierre of France hand supporting. Inset: Welsh patriotism.





Gilly Mara clears the Chicken Chute. Dee Paterson about to swim on Bala Mill Fall.



Sandra Hyslop and winner Michala Strnadova of the Czech Republic.



Bradburn/Pumphrey and the Clough brothers. Below: Cyril Leblond and David Silloto of France.





C2 winners Frederic Momot/Michael Didier.



Rob Murphy of the USA earning himself a headache.



Jonnie Schofield straightens up below Bala Mill Fall on his way to the win.



rock with his palm. Less pleasant was the fact that there was now a strong wind and drizzle, the latter drifting away later to give occasional sunshine.

There were no less than 15 fore runners listed, becoming a class in themselves, mostly younger British paddlers.

The Irish were full of patriotic fervour on being billeted at Frongoch where the leaders of their 1916 uprising had been interned.

Recovered from the previous day, Panato took a 0.11 second lead from Stephane Santamaria, Rob Wylie and Andy Hamilton just in the top 20.

The Nathalies led the women, Leclerc a mere 0.01 second ahead of Gastineau with Michala Strnadova back in 3rd, Sandra and Jennifer Hyslop and Dee Paterson 13 - 15th and Gilly Mara 19th.

The French also led the C2s with the host crews in three of the last four places.

Jonnie Schofield finished first runs immediately behind Robert Pontarollo, both about half a second adrift of Eric Jolit, he of the extreme facial expressions, a similar setup to Schofield's first race which had placed him well for an eventual win. Grant Anderson was 19th, 5 seconds off the pace and even Peter Keron, in 43rd, was only 15 seconds adrift.

Left: John Handyside put the whole World Cup series together.

Right: Jonnie Schofield with Eric Jolit and Arnaud Hybois of France.





John Willacy wins the C1 masters for Wales.



Tina Parsons took the women's masters from Julie Littlewood.

The second runs in C1 saw Panato roll on Bala Mill Fall yet drop no further than 3rd place, less than a second behind winner Santamaria.

A couple of the Irish women chose to accept slightly slower times on the Chicken Chute but they made it, unlike Katerina Vacikova, Dee Paterson and Marnie Fornusek who swam in quick succession. Alexandra Heidrich also swam and had sense of humour failure but got back in her boat and finished, slowest of her class. By this stage Strnadova had taken 2 seconds off her first run time for the win over the Nathalies.

Pecek/Raus had big problems on their second C2 run to drop to last place, leaving the French with the top three positions and the British crews towards the back of the field.

Schofield dropped 0.2 second on his second run, something he could not afford to do. Jolit did likewise but he was adding the second fastest run of the day to the fastest. Carlo Mercati was 4 seconds slower to drop out of contention. However, Pontarollo was to blow it, including catching his blade at the top of Bala Mill Fall and nearly capsizing, his slow time pushing him well down. This left only Arnaud

Hybois and he also dropped 0.13 second. With Pontarollo gone, this allowed Schofield up to 2nd place.

For the final race of the series the wind was almost gone and the sun came out. It was a disappointingly short course, starting at the campsite in order not to interrupt the rafting and finishing above Bala Mill Fall. Nearly all of the course was out of bounds to spectators. The advantage was that it was less onerous for the masters, also included in this event. They went first, John Willacy taking the C1 for Wales. Tina Parsons won the women's event from Julie Littlewood (Ashton) and Julie Hall (Fryers). Smith/McNulty were unchallenged in C2 but produced a respectable time. On the other hand there were 23 men on the start line, Americans, Australian, Italian and Irish racing against the home paddlers. Neil Blackman took a half minute win from Calum Urquhart with Chris Hipgrave of the USA less than a second behind. 6th place went to Maurizio Tognacci as an over 45 while Nigel Morley was 8th as an over 55 who is actually beyond retiring but still embarrassingly fit.

There were to be some changes in C1. Tomislav Hohnjec powered down for his first win while Panato dropped to 10th, which he could

Calum Urquhart was Neil Blackman's nearest challenger.





Tomislav Hohnjec and Stephane Santamaria.

well afford to do with three wins and a 2nd to leave him as unassailable winner once again. This time the British men were pushed out of the top 20, Andy Hamilton taking 15th overall in the series and Rob Wylie 18th. The Croatians took 2nd to 4th and 7th places overall, the best German being 6th with horn support which seemed to do more for Robin Price's cattle which began responding.

Jessica Oughton was back as the best of the British women, placed 14th after time out for school requirements. Jennifer Hyslop lost a blade near the road bridge, swam, recovered her boat, got back in and paddled the second half of the course with only one blade, a most impressive performance which put her last but within 8 minutes of Strnadova who was taking her fifth win out of the five races she contested, the only person to get full points in the series. Having missed the Irish races, Jennifer still finished 14th overall, immediately behind Paterson, Mara and her sister.

Momot/Didier slipped to 9th, beating only the British crews, but compatriots Leblond/Silloto were up there again, having never been out of the top two, giving the top two places to the French.

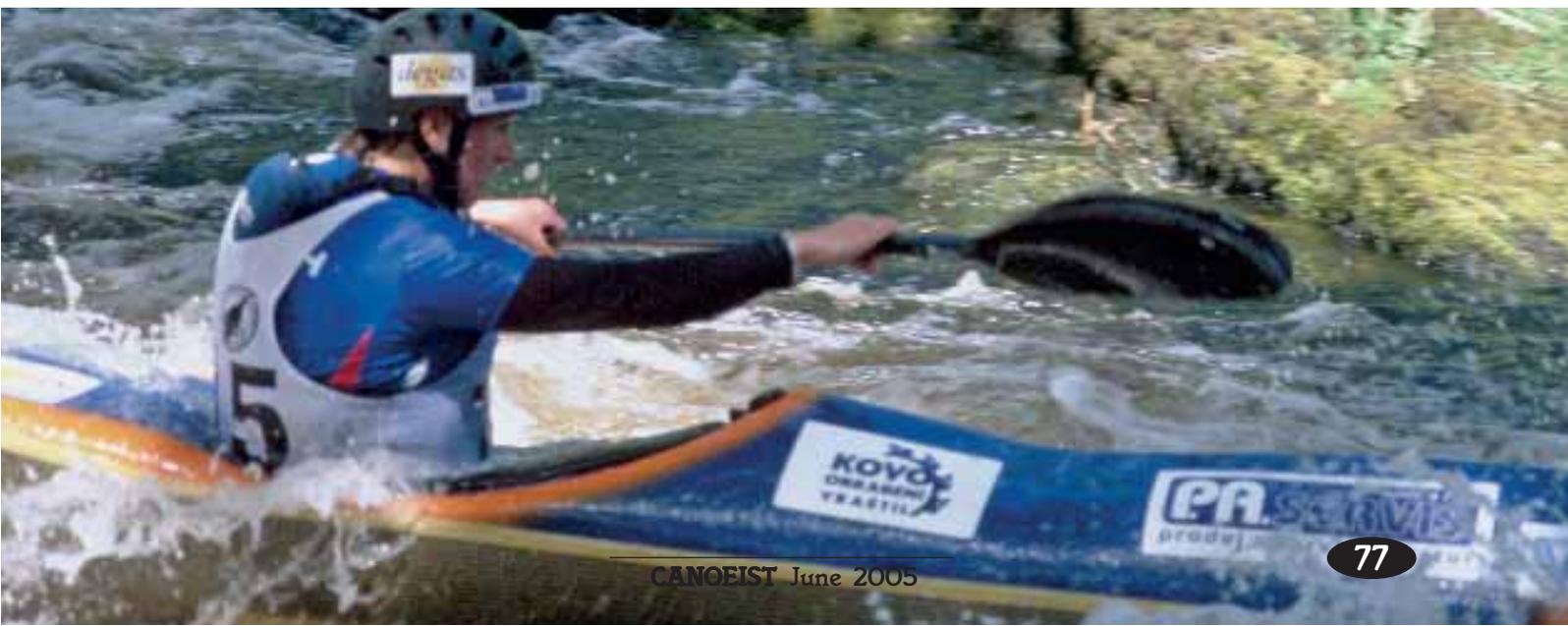
While Schofield was clear winner of the sprint events he was less happy with the classics, this time bringing in 16th. He only needed one classic result to count with his sprint results, the Washburn 13th giving him an impressive 3rd place overall. This race belonged to the Czechs, Kamil Mruzek and Ales Marek leading home the field. This gave Mruzek the overall win but Hybois, in 4th place, was only 2 points off that overall win himself. Peter Keron was 12th, the only one of the British men to beat Schofield. At 40th out of 63, Mustafa Sahin was last



of those who did every race but he seemed to enjoy himself, chalking up a worthwhile result for Turkey, and Bi-Glai Zan, who only did the Irish races, also put the Ivory Coast on the map, beating three other paddlers.

So ended a first rate World Cup series which must surely show the way for the future. There had been no flags or anthems although there had been barbeques or receptions after most events. John and Ben had shown that a series of quality races could be run on a modest budget in a short time and with limited travelling, the sort of thing which could be hosted by many smaller nations or neighbouring nations between themselves. Perhaps this will open up future series to countries who would currently not see themselves as having the resources and to competitors not able to fly half way round the world several times a year.

Michala Strnadova was clear winner of the final race and the series.





Jessica Oughton taking Britain's best women's place.



Jennifer Hyslop did brilliantly to finish with only one blade.



Jamie Oughton nearing the finish.



Michael Mason flying the flag.
Jonnie Schofield races for the line.



Including Peter Schofield photographs

Sp: K1W: 1 M Strnadova, Ceska, 2:42.26. 2 N Leclerc, France, 2:42.89. 3 N Gastineau, France, 2:42.94. 10 J Hyslop, GB, 3:17.13. 11 S Hyslop, GB, 3:20.01. 14 G Mara, GB, 3:39.15. **K1M:** 1 E Jolit, France, 2:26.45. 2 J Schofield, GB, 2:27.41. 3 A Hybois, France, 2:27.49. 15 G Anderson, GB, 2:34.70. **C1:** 1 S Santamaria, France, 2:47.97. 2 I Gojic, Hrvatska, 2:48.53. 3 V Panato, Italia, 2:48.90. 17 A Hamilton, GB, 3:06.97. 19 R Wylie, GB, 3:08.34. **C2:** 1 Momot/Didier, France, 2:44.48. 2 Leblond/Silloto, France, 2:44.70. 3 Dos Santos/Vilas, France, 2:49.64. 7 Clough/Clough, GB, 2:58.86. 8 Pumphrey/Bradburn, GB, 3:01.69. 10 Wright/Christie, GB, 6:04.48. **CI: K1W:** 1 M Strnadova, Ceska, 18:38.92. 2 N Leclerc, France, 18:51.31. 3 A Heidrich, Deutschland, 18:57.02. 14 J Oughton, GB, 20:41.41. 16 S Hyslop, GB, 21:13.03. 17 G Mara, GB, 21:45.33. 18 D Paterson, GB, 22:16.76. **K1WMas:** 1 T Parsons, England, 20:04.50. 2 J Littlewood, England, 23:48.07. 3 J Hall, England, 24:47.24. **K1M:** 1 K Mruzek, Ceska, 17:09.73. 2 A Marek, Ceska, 17:17.56. 3 M Hoff, Deutschland, 17:18.91. 12 P Keron, GB, 17:35.85. 16 J Schofield, GB, 17:45.56. **K1MMas:** 1 N Blackman, England, 18:57.18. 2 C Urquhart, Scotland, 19:33.05. 3 C Hipgrave, USA, 19:33.79. 4 D Belbin, England, 19:40.31. 8 N Morley, England, 20:37.77. 9 H Blackman, England, 20:39.66. 10 M Williams, Wales, 20:54.71. 12 J Embrey, England, 21:29.40. 13 N Stevenson, England, 21:37.74. 14 C Skellern, England, 21:58.66. 16 J Royle, England, 22:11.73. 18 A Nevitt, England, 23:43.62. 19 R Scholey, England, 24:05.31. 20 S Jones, Wales, 24:34.14. **C1:** 1 T Hohnjec, Hrvatska, 19:35.74. 2 L Uncjaitk, Ceska, 19:38.79. 3 S Stiefenhofer, Deutschland, 19:39.34. **C1Mas:** 1 J Willacy, Wales, 22:57.70. 2 J Pinyerd, USA, 23:22.54. 3 R Pearton, England, 24:10.91. 5 D Williams, England, 25:09.14. 6 P Goode, England, 26:51.01. **C2:** 1 Leblond/Silloto, France, 19:28.46. 2 Fahlbusch/Fahlbusch, Deutschland, 19:38.97. 3 Andree/Driesch, Deutschland, 19:40.96. 10 Wright/Christie, GB, 20:37.66. 11 Pumphrey/Bradburn, GB, 21:14.63. 12 Clough/Clough, GB, 21:25.14. **C2Mas:** 1 Smith/McNulty, England, 24:22.56. **O/A: K1W:** 1 M Strnadova, Ceska, 200. 2 N Leclerc, France, 188. 3 A Heidrich, Deutschland, 168. 11 D Paterson, GB, 130. 12 G Mara, GB, 128. 13 S Hyslop, GB, 128. 14 J Hyslop, GB, 117. 18 J Oughton, GB, 101. **K1M:** 1 K Mruzek, Ceska, 379. 2 A Hybois, France, 377. 3 J Schofield, GB, 373. 20 P Keron, GB, 295. **C1:** 1 V Panato, Italia, 196. 2 T Hohnjec, Hrvatska, 185. 3 I Gojic, Hrvatska, 176. 15 A Hamilton, GB, 124. 18 R Wylie, GB, 104. **C2:** 1 Leblond/Silloto, France, 192. 2 Momot/Didier, France, 184. 3 Andree/Driesch, Deutschland, 178. 6 Wright/Christie, GB, 153. 7 Clough/Clough, GB, 148. 8 Pumphrey/Bradburn, GB, 142.

Nene 1 Wild Water Race

K1GU10: 1 A Croucher, Wilts Y, 3:31. **K1GU12:** 1 C Parker, Wilts Y, 1:55. **K1GU14:** 1 M Wood, Banbury, 1:32. 2 R Parker, Wilts Y, 1:43. S Rooney, Banbury, 1:43. **K1GU16:** 1 E Harfield, Leighton Buzzard, 1:28. 2 K Miller, Northampton, 1:31. 3 V Hills, Banbury, 2:08. **K1BU12:** 1 A Baker, Bath, 1:24. 2 A Layton, Northampton, 1:41. 3 M Bowley, Burton, 1:43. **K1BU14:** 1 J Harrison, Shropshire, 1:09. 2 S Allinson, Holme Pierrepont, 1:11. 3 M Connelly, Paddle +, 1:12. **K1BU16:** 1 M Sims, Holme Pierrepont, 1:09. 2 I Baker, Bath, 1:10. 3 R Scott, Wilts Y, 1:22. **B:** 1 P Allinson, Holme Pierrepont, 2:02. 2 M Sims, Holme Pierrepont, 2:09. 3 I Baker, Bath, 2:11. **O:** 1 M Gray, Northampton, 2:40.

English Open Wild Water Race

Sp: K1WA: 1 D Paterson, Shropshire, 3:55. 2 S Hyslop, Hexham, 4:00. 3 O Churchill, Royal, 4:03. **K1MA:** 1 M Steele, Northampton, 3:22. 2 M Mason, Durham, 3:25. 3 P Keron, Kidderminster, 3:27. **B:** 1 R Vincent, Leicester, 3:50. 2 B Nelson, 3:51. 3 C Embrey, Burton, 4:00. **C1A:** 1 R Wylie, Eyt, 3:58. 2 A Hamilton, Stafford & Stone, 3:59. 3 J Wingfield, Dyffryn Conwy, 4:23. **C2A:** 1 Clough/Clough, Tees, 3:36. 2 Wright/Christie, Lincoln/Soar Valley, 3:42. 3 Anderson/Reeves, Chelmsford, 3:57. **CI: K1WA:** 1 T Parsons, Nottingham, 8:38. 2 J Oughton, Paddle +, 8:43. 3 D Paterson, Shropshire, 9:07. **K1MA:** 1 P Keron, Kidderminster, 7:50. 2 R Forbes, Solihull, 7:54. M Mason, Durham, 7:54. **B:** 1 B Nelson, 8:44. 2 R Vincent, Leicester, 8:50. 3 C Embrey, Burton, 9:17. **C1A:** 1 J Willacy, RAF, 9:16. 2 A Hamilton, Stafford & Stone, 9:19. 3 R Wylie, Eyt, 9:31. **C2A:** 1 Clough/Clough, Tees, 8:50. 2 Wright/Christie, Lincoln/Soar Valley, 8:54. 3 Anderson/Reeves, Chelmsford, 9:28.

Awe Wild Water Race

K1WA: 1 T Parsons, Nottingham, 14:43.5. 2 J Oughton, Soar Valley, 15:18.1. 3 D Paterson, Shropshire, 15:42.7. **K1MA:** 1 P Keron, Kidderminster, 13:13.1. 2 R Forbes, Solihull, 13:41.2. 3 M Mason, Durham, 13:42.2. **B:** 1 M Speke, RAF, 16:54.7. 2 I Baker, Bath, 17:47.6. 3 B Phillips, 18:16.7. **C1A:** 1 J Willacy, RAF, 16:27.9. 2 D Bradburn, Chester, 16:41.4. **C2A:** 1 Wright/Christie, Lincoln/Soar Valley, 15:47.2. **T:** 1 13:40. 2 Soar Valley/Northampton, 14:33. 3 15:43.

Grandtully Wild Water Race

K1WA: 1 S Hyslop, Hexham, 3:01.7. 2 D Paterson, Shropshire, 3:01.8. 3 J Oughton, Soar Valley, 3:02.3. **K1MA:** 1 J Schofield, Soar Valley, 2:23.5. 2 G Anderson, Soar Valley, 2:31.5. 3 M Steele, Northampton, 2:34.5. **B:** 1 B Phillips, 3:06.4. 2 M Speke, RAF, 3:14.8. 3 I Baker, Bath, 3:16.0. **C1A:** 1 D Bradburn, Chester, 3:21.5. **C2A:** 1 Wright/Christie, Lincoln/Soar Valley, 2:53.1.

Danson Lake Wild Water Race

K1GU12: 1 A Robson, Meridian, 2:59. 2 L Fry, Meridian, 3:06. 3 C Parker, Wilts Y, 3:50. **K1GU14:** 1 L Matthews, Bromley, 23:06. 2 R Parker, Wilts Y, 3:13. **K1GU16:** 1 S Barry, Meridian, 2:36. 2 G Galvin, Meridian, 2:47. **K1BU12:** 1 A Hicks, Norwich, 2:51. 2 J Thomson, Meridian, 2:59. 3 R Matthews, Bromley, 3:12. **K1BU14:** 1 J Robson, Meridian, 2:22. 2 O Thomson, Meridian, 2:30. 3 A Barry, Meridian, 2:58. **K1BU16:** 1 W Borrett, Meridian, 2:18. 2 D Robson, Meridian, 2:22. 3 S Fry, Meridian, 2:32. **O:** 1 A Hicks, Norwich, 2:10. 2 B Borrett, Meridian, 2:25. 3 M Blowers, Meridian, 2:40.

Chester Dee Wild Water Race

B: 1 D Davies, Shropshire, 10:15. 2 S Templeton, Itchen Valley, 10:23. 3 A Hicks, Norwich, 10:34.

Sowerby Bridge Wild Water Race

K1GU12: 1 J Acheson, Halifax, 3:03. **K1GU16:** 1 H James, Ribble, 1:38. **K1BU12:** 1 T Fuller, Ribble, 1:45. 2 O Bamber, Ribble, 1:56. 3 D Lomax, Halifax, 2:01. **K1BU14:** 1 M Lister, White Rose, 1:25. 2 J Spencer, Halifax, 1:40. **K1BU16:** 1 T Wild, Halifax, 1:39. 2 A Limmer, Halifax, 1:59.

Derwent Dash Wild Water Race

B: 1 S Templeton, Itchen Valley, 7:09. 2 M Sims, Holme Pierrepont, 7:24. 3 M Sahin, Pleasey Vale, 7:40. **O:** 1 J Oughton, Leicester Outdoor Pursuits, 6:51. 2 P Allinson, Nottingham, 7:28. 3 D Pryce, 8:15.

Wagon Lane Wild Water Race

Ranking list leaders: K1GU10: 1 M Croft, Durham, 25. 2 E Croft, Durham, 24. 3 E Stell, Bradford & Bingley, 23. **K1GU12:** 1 C Parker, Bath, 75. 2 S Walters, Burton, 50. 3 J Acheson, Halifax, 25. **K1GU14:** 1 R Parker, Wilts, 99. 2 I Oxtoby, Leighton Buzzard, 25. H Sheridan, Green Star, 25. **K1GU16:** 1 H Brown, Bath, 50. 2 J Mallinder, Green Star, 25. K Miller, Northampton, 25. L Seagar, Shropshire, 25. **K1BU10:** 1 M Jeffries, Pennine Syngenta, 50. 2 B Brown, Melbourne Cubs, 25. E Stell, Bradford & Bingley, 25. **K1BU12:** 1 A Baker, Bath, 125. 2 M Bowley, Burton, 98. 3 R Jeffries, Pennine Syngenta, 47. **K1BU14:** 1 J Harrison, Shropshire, 98. 2 S Allinson, Nottingham, 73. 3 D Palmer, Wilts, 47. **K1BU16:** 1 M Walters, Burton, 119. 2 I Baker, Bath, 97. 3 M Sims, Holme Pierrepont, 50. **C1U16:** 1 I Baker, Bath, 20. 2 J Hiam, Shropshire, 19.

Ian Wynne takes bronze

Duisburg Regatta

Britain's Ian Wynne followed his Athens success last year with another bronze medal in the men's singles kayak 500m at the Duisburg Regatta in Germany.

Wynne's bronze was the highlight of the weekend for GB canoeing although, overall, the team qualified for 7 A finals, exceeding expectations and pleasing team manager Alan Williams.

'We were expecting to get boats into 3 or 4 finals so to have 7 qualify is great news. Ian paddled very well in the 500m to take bronze and Abi (Coulson) and Lucy (Hardy) have done extremely well all weekend, getting into all three of their finals. Overall we are extremely pleased with the results, especially as we have such a young team, most of whom will be racing in the U23 European Championships in Bulgaria in July.'

Abigail Coulson and Lucy Hardy are GB's new pair in the women's doubles kayak class. This is the first major event in which they have paddled together, both having made the move from the women's singles kayak last season. They claimed two 6th places at Duisburg in the 500m and 1000m.

Other notable GB performances came in the men's doubles kayak 500m where Ed McKeever and Ed Cox reached the A final and Paul Wycherley and Ben Farrell claimed 2nd place in the B final.

Chris Simon

200m: K1W: 1 K Furneaux, Canada, 42.940. 2 R Lovell, Australia, 43.120. 3 C Waßmuth, Deutschland, 43.346. **K1M:** 1 T Mendelski, Polska, 37.597. 2 L Altepott, Deutschland, 37.743. 3 R Petrukanecas, Lietuva, 37.787. 7 I Wynne, GB, 38.340. **K2W:** 1 Kmetova/Kohlova, Slovensko, 40.320. 2 Schiltzer/Schwarz, Österreich, 40.516. 3 Fischer/Knebel, Deutschland, 40.723. 8 Coulson/Hardy, GB, 41.916. **K2M:** 1 Twardowski/Wysocki, Polska, 33.407. 2 Zarubin/Tourchenkov, Rossija, 33.970. 3 Rauhe/Wieskötter, Deutschland, 34.050. 9 Cox/McKeever, GB, 35.420. **C2:** 1 Guanlian/Wenjun, Zhongguo, 37.970. 2 Gilje/Wylenzek, Deutschland, 38.663. 3 Ignatov/Lipkin, Rossija, 39.103. **500m: K1W:** 1 N Reinhardt, Deutschland, 1:55.019. 2 K Glazewski, Polska, 1:56.815. 3 K Furneaux, Canada, 1:56.925. **K1M:** 1 A Van Koevoeren, Canada, 1:40.564. 2 E Veras Larsen, Norge, 1:40.874. 3 I Wynne, GB, 1:41.057. **C1:** 1 M Opalev, Rossija, 1:50.736. 2 A Dittmer, Deutschland, 1:50.816. 3 P Baraszkiwicz, Polska, 1:51.916. **K2W:** 1 Mikołajczyk/Dziszewska, Polska, 1:46.560. 2 Chojnacka/Czajczyńska, Polska, 1:48.476. 3 Fischer/Knebel, Deutschland, 1:48.936. 6 Coulson/Hardy, GB, 1:50.873. **K2M:** 1 Rauhe/Wieskötter, Deutschland, 1:31.765. 2 Twardowski/Wysocki, Polska, 1:31.858. 3 Zarubin/Tourchenkov, Rossija, 1:32.738. 9 Cox/McKeever, GB, 1:35.518. **1km: K1M:** 1 A Van Koevoeren, Canada, 3:32.586. 2 B Fouhy, NZ, 3:33.816. 3 E Veras Larsen, Norge, 3:33.909. **K2W:** 1 Viard/Delattre, France, 3:48.405. 2 Oppen-Rhein/Nollen, Deutschland, 3:48.515. 3 Chojnacka/Czajczyńska, Polska, 3:49.943. 5 Coulson/Hardy, GB, 3:54.722. **K2M:** 1 Ihle/Herszel, Deutschland, 3:19.374. 2 Seroczynski/Nowak, Polska, 3:19.667. 3 Medvedev/Vasil'ev, Rossija, 3:19.734. **C2:** 1 Buday/Buday, Canada, 3:42.175. 2 Kostoglod/Kovalev, Rossija, 3:42.542. 3 Gilje/Wylenzek, Deutschland, 3:42.722.

Ian Wynne dominates at Nottingham National Regatta

Olympic silver medallist Ian Wynne continued his domination of the men's singles kayak 500 metre class when he led the race from the front to win comfortably by almost two seconds from Ben Farrell. The result confirmed Ian's place in the GB senior team to compete in Duisburg, Germany, at the World Cup regatta from 27th to 29th May.

He would be joined in the team by the new senior women's kayak pair featuring Nottingham athlete Lucy Hardy and her partner, Abigail Coulson. They also dominated to win their 500m race comfortably in a time of 1 min 52 seconds.

Said Lucy after the race 'We felt we paddled a pretty good race and so far things seem to be going to plan. Our main goal for this season has been about improving our performance together in the K2. To win today and gain selection for the World Cup race at the same time is obviously a great result for us both.'

The national women's coach, Claudine Le Roux, was also pleased with the performance of Coulson and Hardy: 'They competed well today and can now look forward to the Duisburg regatta. It will be a tough field that will include the Olympic medallists. This will enable us to really discover how we compare against the best in the world.'

In the men's pairs class it was yet another great weekend for the exciting new pairing of Ben Farrell and Paul Wycherley. They won both of their K2 events and so would also be heading east to the German World Cup race later in the month.

Chris Simon

200m: K1W: 1 S Braithwaite, Nottingham, 51.49. 2 N Taylor, Elmbridge, 56.49. 3 A Wise, Royal, 59.10. **K1WS:** 1 S Bapty, Army, 55.77. 2 S Fowler, Army, 56.47. 3 Goodall, Army, 1:00.70. **K1M:** 1 E McKeever, Bradford-on-Avon, 38.99. 2 I Wynne, Royal, 39.44. 3 P Almasi, Elmbridge, 40.87. **K1MS:** 1 R Reese, Army, 44.99. 2 Hemming, Army, 45.21. 3 M Barnes, Army, 45.53. **K1P:** 1 A Sheppard, Newark, 1:04.34. 2 S Carter, NE Disability, 1:08.23. 3 D Fenwick, NE Disability, 1:09.65. **C1B:** 1 J Train, Fladbury, 49.65. 2 K Yurkovich, Olympic Leamington Spa, 50.13. 3 L Watson, Nottingham, 51.57. **K2W:** 1 Coulson/Hardy, Olympic, 46.28. 2 Gilbe/Gilbe, Wey, 49.15. **K2WS:** 1 Fowler/Goodall, Army, 53.06. 2 Bapty/Kellet, Army, 56.72. 3 Dobson/Briggs, Royal Navy, 1:04.84. **K2M:** 1 Stevens/Egan, Salmon Leap, 37.94. 2 Wagner/Schmeicher, Essen, 38.51. 3 Mayoock/Mayoock, Exeter, 39.75. **K2P:** 1 Bull/Oldham, Pennine Syngenta, 1:12.45. 2 Sheppard/Broome, Newark, 1:21.67. 3 Carter/Neuville, Pennine Syngenta/NE Disability, 1:22.01. **K4WS:** 1 Army, 1:00.34. 2 Army, 1:09.31. 3 Royal Navy, 1:40.55. **500m: K1G:** 1 F Burridge, Royal, 2:45.88. 2 I Beardsell, Cokethorpe School, 2:43.53. 2 F Farrington, Royal, 2:47.49. **K1GC:** 1 R Pascoe, Turu, 2:24.62. 2 F Lamph, Wey, 2:27.14. 3 M Hall, Bishop's Stortford, 2:28.47. **K1GB:** 1 R Battison, Reading, 2:22.96. 2 R Cawthon, Wey, 2:25.79. 3 E Dougall, Leighton Buzzard, 2:26.89. **K1GA:** 1 L Brown, Barking & Dagenham, 2:16.02. 2 L Sowers, Elmbridge, 2:17.38. 3 A King, Reading, 2:17.41. **K1WA:** 1 A Coulson, Reading, 2:03.99. [2 M Lawrence, Leighton Buzzard, 2:05.82. 3 J Train, Fladbury, 2:08.53.] 4 S Braithwaite,

Nottingham, 2:09.09. 5 L Hardy, Nottingham, 2:10.78. **K1WB:** 1 K Dawson, Chester, 2:12.24. 2 T Nutt, Elmbridge, 2:12.92. 3 H Mason, Nottingham, 2:13.60. **K1WC:** 1 Ce Gilbe, Wey, 2:23.05. 2 V Surragge, Bishop's Stortford, 2:23.37. 3 A Wise, Royal, 2:28.92. **K1WD:** 1 S Colley, Hereford, 2:36.32. 2 V Swallow, Chester, 2:39.63. 3 D Matthews, Leighton Buzzard, 2:46.57. **K1WS:** 1 S Bapty, Army, 2:24.30. 2 S Fowler, Army, 2:25.17. 3 Goodall, Army, 2:43.15. **K1LGu10:** 1 B Owen, Addlestone, 3:39.11. 2 K Stone, Banbury, 3:39.72. 3 D Adair, Worcester, 3:43.04. **K1LGu12:** 1 K Jacobs, Addlestone, 3:24.23. 2 B Wadsworth, Royal, 3:24.88. 3 A Hicks, Norwich, 3:25.08. **K1BD:** 1 M White, Leighton Buzzard, 2:19.84. 2 S Dixon, Royal, 2:21.29. 3 A Capellaro, Westel, 2:23.45. **K1BC:** 1 D Fleming, Cokethorpe, 2:07.55. 2 T Humphries, Royal, 2:10.00. 3 O Gibson, Royal, 2:11.95. **K1BB:** 1 R Beer, Westel, 2:03.06. 2 K Reeves, Addlestone, 2:03.37. 3 S Bennett, Reading, 2:06.80. **K1BA:** 1 B Watkins, Salmon Leap, 1:58.25. 2 B Maurissen, Bradford-on-Avon, 1:59.44. 3 E Rutherford, Elmbridge, 2:01.66. **K1MA:** 1 I Wynne, Royal, 1:45.10. 2 B Farrell, Elmbridge, 1:46.90. 3 E McKeever, Bradford-on-Avon, 1:48.10. **K1MB:** 1 I Lawler, Elmbridge, 1:57.51. 2 C Sears, Royal, 1:57.70. 3 P Pringle, Salmon Leap, 1:57.91. **K1MC:** 1 B Stead, Richmond, 2:02.62. 2 D Seaford, Reading, 2:06.75. 3 Turner, Bristol, 2:07.31. **K1MD:** 1 I Pederson, Falcon, 2:10.74. 2 S Hicks, Nottingham, 2:15.68. 3 S Darling, Bradford-on-Avon, 2:16.01. **K1MS:** 1 D Gallimore, RAF, 2:06.36. 2 M Barnes, Army, 2:08.71. 3 B Reese, Army, 2:11.79. **K1P:** 1 J Oldham, Pennine Syngenta, 2:53.06. 2 D Fenwick, NE Disability, 3:08.48. 3 M Taylor, Maidstone, 3:21.63. **K1MVA:** 1 R Smith, Cambridge, 2:04.26. 2 P Brooks, Runcorn, 2:07.50. 3 G Illidge, C1J, 2:10.37. **K1MVB:** 1 R Vincent, Leicester, 2:24.90. 2 T Beaver, Leicester, 2:26.14. 3 A Holmes, Worcester, 2:26.88. **C1J:** 1 G Hunt, Fladbury, 2:42.02. 1 E Poulter, Fladbury, 3:06.43. 2 D Meikle, Fladbury, 3:10.55. **C1B:** 1 M Lawrence, Leighton Buzzard, 2:17.47. 2 J Train, Fladbury, 2:23.76. 3 L Watson, Nottingham, 2:26.51. **K2GD:** 1 Burridge/Staddon, Royal, 2:27.76. 2 Ferguson/Holmes, Banbury, 2:30.31. 3 Rees/Kelly, Hereford/Kendal, 2:30.98. **K2GC:** 1 Burridge/Purnel, Royal, 2:17.16. 2 Lamph/Godsave, Wey, 2:18.77. 3 Swallow/Rowlands, Chester, 2:19.96. **K2GB:** 1 Cawthon/Battison, Wey, 2:11.60. 2 Blackwell/Whitehead, Wokingham, 2:14.70. 3 Broughton/O'Callaghan, Richmond, 2:22.80. **K2GA:** 1 Spencer/King, Hereford/Reading, 2:05.33. 2 Moran/Moran, Worcester, 2:08.86. 3 Sowers/Brown, Elmbridge/Barking & Dagenham, 2:08.98. **K2WA:** 1 Coulson/Hardy, Olympic, 1:52.48. [2 Lawrence/Train, Olympic, 1:54.50.] 3 Braithwaite/Nutt, Olympic, 1:57.43. 4 Dawson/Mason, Olympic, 2:02.54. **K2WC/D:** 1 Gilbe/Gilbe, Wey, 2:11.83. 2 Hunter/Bee, Norwich, 2:16.63. 3 Back/Hutt, Richmond/Scottish Development, 2:25.47. **K2WS:** 1 Bapty/Fowler, Army, 2:20.74. 2 Goodall/Kellet, Army, 2:38.87. 3 Dobson/Briggs, Royal Navy, 2:56.81. **K2LGu10:** 1 Beer/Farrington, Royal, 3:39.57. 2 Adair/Adair, Worcester, 3:45.01. 3 Stone/Warren, Banbury, 4:03.32. **K2LGu12:** 1 Wadsworth/Rees, Royal, 2:51.44. 2 Baker/Hicks, Bath/Norwich, 2:55.73. 3 Owen/Jacobs, Addlestone, 2:57.59. **K2BD:** 1 Riley/Vincent, Leicester, 2:15.35. 2 Capellaro/Jordan, Westel, 2:20.30. 3 Beyer/Green, Addlestone/Barking & Dagenham, 2:20.84. **K2BC:** 1 Pearce/Pearce, Cokethorpe School, 2:07.70. 2 Lang/Williams, Reading/Wey, 2:08.39. 3 Humphreys/Dixon, Royal, 2:12.70. **K2BB:** 1 Reeves/Hide, Addlestone, 1:54.03. 2 Holmes/Wood, Worcester, 1:56.88. 3 Bradshaw/Pendle, Barking & Dagenham, 1:57.67. **K2BA:** 1 Watkins/Fleming, Salmon Leap/Celbridge, 1:46.91. 2 Hide/Maurissen, Addlestone/Bradford-on-Avon, 1:47.66. 3 Rutherford/Williams, Reading, 1:48.95. **K2MA:** 1 Farrell/Wycherley, Olympic, 1:41.17. 2 Maloney/Fleming, Salmon Leap/Celbridge, 1:41.38. 3 Wagner/Schmeicher, Essen, 1:44.10. **K2MB:** 1 Elkington-Cole/Irvine, Richmond, 1:49.42. 2 Seaford/Peake, Reading, 1:50.81. 3 Pedlar/Mayers, Worcester, 1:52.02. **K2MC:** 1 Morton/French, Westel/Ealing, 1:56.62. 2 Todd/Carlow, Richmond, 1:56.8. 3 Fleeson/Cartwright, Anker Valley, 1:58.5. **K2MS:** 1 Duff/Gallimore, RAF, 1:53.07. 2 Reese/Hemming, Army, 1:55.58. 3 Barnes/Walker, Army, 1:58.28. **K2P:** 1 Carter/Oldham, Pennine Syngenta/NE Disability, 2:44.43. 2 Dilai/Broome, Newark/Pennine Syngenta, 2:51.66. 3 Gardner/Fenwick, NE Disability, 3:11.69. **K2MVA:** 1 Marnell/Illidge, Runcorn, 2:04.20. 2 Smith/Hyune, Cambridge, 2:21.37. **K2MVB:** 1 Beaver/Vincent, Leicester, 2:09.41. 2 Oliver/Oliver, Lincoln, 2:10.63. 3 Holmes/Moran, Worcester, 2:21.81. **C2J:** 1 Hunt/Poulter, Fladbury, 2:46.10. 2 Dresch/Meikle, Fladbury, 2:46.10. 3 Duck/Crooks, Richmond/Leighton Buzzard, 2:57.49. **C2B:** 1 Monaghan/O'Donovan, Salmon Leap, 2:13.96. 2 Badelek/Watson, Wey/Nottingham, 2:18.04. 3 Joier/Gohar, Richmond, 3:17.19. **C2C:** 1 Cozens/Shipp, Chelmsford, 3:20.92. 2 Cox/Mead, Lincoln, 3:27.78. 3 Joier/Gohar, Richmond, 3:35.33. **K4GD:** 1 Nottingham, 2:10.14. 2 Reading/Cokethorpe School, 2:15.86. 3 Leighton Buzzard/Bishop's Stortford, 2:17.44. **K4G/CW:** 1 Olympic, 1:54.76. 2 World Class Start, 2:01.82. 3 World Class Start, 2:02.27. **K4BD:** 1 Leicester, 2:17.50. 2 Worcester, 2:25.73. 3 Leighton Buzzard, 2:31.93. **K4BA - C:** 1 World Class Start, 1:50.07. 2 World Class Start, 1:51.86. 3 World Class Start, 1:54.65. **K4MA:** 1 Olympic, 1:33.21. 2 World Class Start, 1:34.66. 3 Salmon Leap/Celbridge, 1:37.86. **K4MC/D/VA - D:** 1 Addlestone, 2:04.01. 2 Worcester, 2:05.53. 3 Burton/Scottish Development, 2:09.97. **K4MS:** 1 RAF, 1:50.82. 2 Army, 1:53.58. 3 Army, 1:58.36. **C4J:** 1 Fladbury/Banbury, 2:38.55. 2 Fladbury/Banbury, 2:41.00. 3 Richmond/Leighton Buzzard, 2:53.50. **1km: K1GD:** 1 H Gallagher, Nottingham, 5:50.34. 2 S Holmes, Worcester, 5:56.75. 3 B Goodlad, Leighton Buzzard, 5:58.42. **K1GC:** 1 R Pascoe, Turu, 5:23.69. 2 F Lamph, Wey, 5:29.83. 3 Godsave, Wey, 5:35.34. **K1GB:** 1 L Broughton, Richmond, 5:01.90. 2 E Dougall, Leighton Buzzard, 5:07.16. 3 R Cawthon, Wey, 5:09.62. **K1GA:** 1 J Egan, Salmon Leap, 4:42.41. 2 L Sowers, Elmbridge, 4:43.57. 3 A King, Reading, 4:44.15. **K1WB:** [1 M Lawrence, Leighton Buzzard, 4:35.28. 2 J Train, Fladbury, 4:39.40.] 4 J Nutt, Elmbridge, 4:41.80. 4 J Spencer, Hereford, 4:43.04. 5 J Bates, Elmbridge, 4:43.31. **K1WC:** 1 V Surragge, Bishop's Stortford, 4:53.48. 2 Ce Gilbe, Wey, 5:00.80. 3 G Gilbe, Wey, 5:01.53. **K1WD:** 1 V Swallow, Chester, 5:32.84. 2 S Colley, Hereford, 5:37.13. 3 A Childerstone, Wey, 5:56.76. **K1LGu10:** 1 A Kerr, Barking & Dagenham, 6:22. 2 K Stone, Banbury, 9:19. 3 J Childerstone, Wey, 9:58. **K1LGu12:** 1 B Wadsworth, Royal, 8:05. 2 S Rees, Royal, 8:34. 3 E Burbridge, Royal, 8:43. **K1BD:** 1 M White, Leighton Buzzard, 5:18.14. 2 S Riley, Anker Valley, 5:18.31. 3 J Beyer, Addlestone, 5:25.74. **K1BC:** 1 T Humphries, Royal, 4:56.82. 2 P Thorogood, Elmbridge, 4:59.83. 3 O Gibson, Royal, 5:00.57. **K1BB:** 1 R Beer, Westel, 4:24.75. 2 S Sims, Richmond, 4:26.82. 3 I Hide, Addlestone, 4:30.44. **K1BA:** 1 B Watkins, Salmon Leap, 4:14.95. 2 C Fleming, Celbridge, 4:23.13. 3 Rutherford, Elmbridge, 4:24.62. **K1MA:** 1 P Almasi, Addlestone, 4:00.86. 2 I Wynne, Royal, 4:01.46. 3 R Wagner, Essen, 4:04.71. **K1MB:** 1 C Sears, Royal, 4:18.79. 2 Peake, Bradford-on-Avon, 4:19.37. 3 J Mayers, Runcorn, 4:19.58. **K1MC:** 1 D Morton, Westel, 4:40.21. 2 D Seaford, Reading, 4:40.75. 3 C Carlow, Richmond, 4:48.75. **K1MD:** 1 S Hicks, Nottingham, 4:55.57. 2 S Darling, Bradford-on-Avon, 5:09.08. 3 T McKeever, Bradford-on-Avon, 5:09.53. **K1MS:** 1 Duff, RAF, 4:24.87. 2 Ross, Army, 4:30.10. 3 J Smith, RAF, 4:34.69. **K1MVA:** 1 A Grimwood, Lincoln, 4:46.83. 2 R Smith, Cambridge, 4:48.91. 3 D Sargent, Nottingham, 4:50.87. **K1MVB:** 1 R Vincent, Leicester, 5:10.90. 2 A Ince, Tonbridge, 5:13.54. 3 P Hutt, Scottish Development, 5:34.73. **C1J:** 1 E Poulter, Fladbury, 7:25.20. 2 R Weir, Banbury, 7:38.58. 3 E Kilby, Richmond, 7:54.45. **C1B:** 1 J Train, Fladbury, 5:20.80. 2 L Watson, Nottingham, 5:24.34. 3 R Crooks, Leighton Buzzard, 6:47.25. **K2GD:** 1 Goodlad/Thomas, Leighton Buzzard/Bishop's Stortford, 5:21.14. 2 Burridge/Staddon, Royal, 5:25.71. 3 Whysall/Harold, Nottingham, 5:27.85. **K2GC:** 1 Lamph/Godsave, Wey, 5:06.96. 2 Swallow/Rowlands, Chester, 5:12.00. 3 Burridge/Purnel, Royal, 5:16.09. **K2GB:** 1 Cawthon/Battison, Wey, 4:59.02. 2 O'Callaghan/Broughton, Elmbridge, 5:03.39. 3 Blackwell/Whitehead, Wokingham, 5:04.06. **K2GA:** 1 Spencer/King, Hereford/Reading, 4:48.90. 2 Moran/Moran, Worcester, 5:02.24. **K2WA:** 1 Coulson/Hardy, Olympic, 4:18.32. [2 Lawrence/Train, Olympic, 4:22.50.] 3 Braithwaite/Nutt, Olympic, 4:27.33. 4 Negus/Taylor, Olympic, 4:35.22. **K2WC/D:** 1 Hunter/Bee, Norwich, 5:13.41. 2 Dilai/Swallow, Pennine Syngenta/Chester, 5:31.21. 3 Soar/Hawthorn, Worcester, 5:32.00. **K2LGu10:** 1 Beer/Farrington, Royal, 7:28.34. 2 Wadsworth/Rees, Royal, 7:49.48. 3 Stone/Warren, Banbury, 8:04.56. **K2LGu12:** 1 Wadsworth/Rees, Royal, 6:23.06. 2 Childerstone/Childerstone, Wey, 6:48.70. 3 Osborne/Williams, Leighton Buzzard, 7:07.78. **K2BD:** 1 Vincent/Riley, Leicester/Anker Valley, 4:56.50. 2 Capellaro/Jordan, Westel, 4:59.19. 3 Sealey/Lang, Reading, 5:10.09. **K2BC:** 1 Thorogood/Thorogood, Elmbridge, 4:46.45. 2 Williams/Lang, Wey/Reading, 4:49.30. 3 Burridge/Gibson, Wey/Royal, 4:49.76. **K2BB:** 1 Reeves/Hide, Addlestone, 4:16.93. 2 Bradshaw/Pendle, Barking & Dagenham/Norwich, 4:18.36. 3 Whitehead/Sheppard, Chelmsford, 4:19.79. **K2BA:** 1 Watkins/Fleming, Salmon Leap, 4:10.07. 2 Williams/Rutherford, Reading, 4:10.60. 3 Hide/Maurissen, Addlestone/Bradford-on-Avon, 4:15.29. **K2MA:** 1 Farrell/Wycherley, Olympic, 3:37.38. 2 Daniels/Brown, 3:41.37. 3 Maloney/Fleming, Salmon Leap, 3:47.44. **K2MB:** 1 Pedlar/Mayers, Worcester/Runcorn, 3:58.34. 2 Walsh/Pringle, Salmon Leap, 4:03.12. 3 Seaford/Peake, Reading/Bradford-on-Avon, 4:03.67. **K2MC:** 1 Malton/French, Westel, 4:28.25. 2 Todd/Carlow, Richmond, 4:35.82. 3 Britnell/Pederson, Falcon, 4:46.19. **K2MS:** 1 Duff/Gallimore, RAF, 4:10.32. 2 Reese/Hemming, Army, 4:13.78. 3 Ross/Herbert, Army, 4:16.21. **K2P:** 1 Carter/Oldham, Pennine Syngenta/NE Disability, 6:12.17. 2 Taylor/Gardner, NE Disability/Maidstone, 7:22.37. **K2MVA:** 1 Grimwood/Brooks, Lincoln/Runcorn, 4:26.48. 2 Marnell/Illidge, Runcorn, 4:27.48. 3 Middlehurst/Bayliss, Wey, 4:45.79. **K2MVB:** 1 Beaver/Vincent, Leicester, 4:49.82. 2 Holmes/Moran, Worcester, 4:50.06. 3 Oliver/Oliver, Lincoln, 4:58.68. **C2J:** 1 Hunt/Poulter, Fladbury, 5:36.01. 2 Kilby/Gohar, Richmond, 5:42.36. 3 Dresch/Meikle, Fladbury, 6:10.97. **C2B:** 1 Monaghan/O'Donovan, Salmon Leap, 4:59.36. 2 Bodelek/Watson, Wey/Nottingham, 5:05.67. **K4GD:** 1 Royal, 4:44.08. 2 Leighton Buzzard/Bishop's Stortford, 4:52.80. 3 Reading/Cokethorpe School, 4:55.75. **K4GA:** 1 World Class Start, 4:29.71. 2 World Class Start, 4:32.80. 3 World Class Start, 5:02.72. **K4BD:** 1 Anker Valley, 4:38.08. 2 Worcester, 4:49.92. 3 Leighton Buzzard, 4:54.30. **K4BA - C:** 1 World Class Start, 3:53.89. 2 World Class Start, 3:59.01. 3 World Class Start, 3:59.86. **K4MA:** 1 Olympic, 3:29.46. 2 Essen/Exeter, 3:30.36. 3 Olympic, 3:30.53. **K4MC/D/VA/B:** 1 Lincoln/Macesfield, 4:12.19. 2 Worcester, 4:13.91. 3 Burton/Scottish Development, 4:31.76. **2.5km: K1GD:** 1 I Beardsell, Cokethorpe School, 14:05. 2 B Goodlad, Leighton Buzzard, 14:49. 3 K Wood, Banbury, 15:23. **K1GC:** 1 L Godsave, Wey, 13:49. 2 M O'Callaghan, Elmbridge, 14:02. 3 H Towler, Wey, 14:05. **K1BD:** 1 M White, Leighton Buzzard, 13:05. 2 S Riley, Anker Valley, 13:07. 3 A Jordan, Maidstone, 13:12. **K1BC:** 1 P Thorogood, Elmbridge, 12:11. 2 O Gibson, Royal, 12:13. 3 S Rainey, Leeds, 12:15. **K1GB:** 1 Goodlad/Thomas, Leighton Buzzard, 13:48. 2 Collins/Churnside, Reading, 13:54. 3 Harfield/Oxtoby, Leighton Buzzard, 14:13. **K2BD:** 1 Capellaro/Jordan, Westel, 13:08. 2 Graves/Duncan, Bishop's Stortford, 13:37. 3 Wawincsa/Patterson, Bishop's Stortford, 13:50. **5km: K1GU18:** 1 L Broughton, Richmond, 29:00. 2 F Lamph, Wey, 29:05. 3 R Cawthon, Wey, 29:10. **K1WB:** 1 J Bates, Elmbridge, 25:10. **K1WC:** 1 S Colley, Hereford, 29:31. 2 T Dresch, Fladbury, 31:03. 3 A Childerstone, Wey, 32:06. **K1BU18:** 1 E Rutherford, Elmbridge, 24:10. 2 S Sims, Richmond, 24:18. 3 S Bennett, Reading, 24:48. **K1MA:** 1 M Quane, Elmbridge, 22:32. 2 M Goodall, Elmbridge, 22:33. 3 J Mayers, Runcorn, 22:34. **K1MB:** 1 M Lorenzi, Addlestone, 23:30. **K1MC:** 1 R Reese, Army, 24:38. 2 D Morton, Westel, 25:38. 3 A French, Ealing, 26:27. **K1MD:** 1 S Hicks, Nottingham, 28:38. **K1MVA:** 1 S Marnell, Runcorn, 24:44. 2 A Nicholson, Wey, 25:25. 3 S Bapty, 25:27. **K1MVB:** 1 R Vincent, Leicester, 27:03. 2 R Oliver, Lincoln, 30:00. 3 S Goodlad, Leighton Buzzard, 33:40. **K4MS:** 1 RAF, 21:10. 2 Royal Navy, 21:27. 3 Army, 21:01.



Rob Michael holds windward advantage over Rob Bell.

Was this really Wales?

Corus Regatta

With a weather forecast that was promising a wet and windy weekend in south Wales, it was a credit to the sailors who travelled along the M4 to make the Corus Open meeting such an enjoyable event. Saturday was indeed windy and the couple of boats blowing off their trolleys whilst being rigged provoked anxious faces. Spinnaker choice was easy, small, and places were won and lost on the misfortunes of others. Overnight leaders were Steve Bowen in the AC fleet and Dave Timson in the IC fleet.

The evening meal at a local hotel resulted in a few tender heads appreciating the 11 o'clock start on the Sunday. The rain hadn't materialized, kit left out overnight was indeed dry and four races took place in a sunny force 3! Was this really Wales?

Robin Wood showed everyone a clean pair of heels (or should that be spinnaker?) on the Sunday and won the overall weekend, followed by Steve Bowen and Rob 'Esophagus' Michael. Dave Timson easily won the IC fleet.

Many thanks to Ian Williams, who ran a proficient weekend as OD, and to Corus Sailing Club who have been warned that the canoe fleet would like to return next year!

Gareth Caldwell, asked as a result of his excellent view of proceedings from the back of the fleet!



Steve Bowen flying downwind.



Asymmetric champion Robin Wood.

Andy Bilen photographs

Problems dressing

Bala Regatta

This was a classic meet, a new venue, weather out of the ordinary for early April and good sailing conditions.

Our thanks are due to Rod Levene and Steve Robinson for sussing out the new campsite at the Catamaran Club, which is on a gravel spit looking out over the whole lake. It has a section kept for the cats, a level green field with toilets, a wilder area amongst trees and gravel where day sailors obviously come and the whole area kept clean by wardens of the Snowdonia National Park, it seems.

The encouraging forecast was spot on, a gentle Friday introduction, a beautiful sunny and windy Saturday and a Sunday which went gradually downhill.

Following ongoing deliberations by the Safety Working Party, Steve and Rod had produced a sheet of awareness and liability for everyone to sign and a sign out sheet for all sailors when they left to sail with expected time back. The latter would trigger a search an hour after failing to return and, two hours afterwards, the calling in of emergency services. This appeared to work well. It didn't force anybody to do anything but, with the advice to also buddy up on trips, gave everybody a little bit more security. (It doesn't stop the need to be able to self rescue!)

The mornings were similar, rather as Ullswater turns out, dead quiet and flat at 8.00, a stirring in the trees by 9.30 and a good wind by 11.00.

On Saturday morning we had a very useful talk by Keith and Steve on boat safety, covering points such as buoyancy, tools and tackle to take, leading on to a practical capsizing and rescue session in the afternoon.

Our thanks for a very thoughtful and helpful session.

I counted 14 boats setting sail at about midday and we had a stirring sail down to Bala, the wind rising all the time. Sitting outside (in April)

at the teashop, I was definitely overdressed and too hot. With the crowds who were out it was like August.

The sail back was a bit more adventurous, the wind not only rising but very fluky and changeable, you know the sort of thing, no altering of anything on the boat but going from a tack to a reach to a run in one go!

Two people came croppers. Paul capsized, aided by Dave Stubbs to get back in, and John Shuttleworth, in his new single outrigger machine, also had a spill.

Keith and Steve then gave us a rescue session in three scenarios, which we all agreed should be repeated at other venues. All showed how difficult it would be to get back in a boat that rides high out of the water but also how another helper (me) to give the rescuer a stable platform made a lot of difference. Finally, Keith, who by now must have been tired, failed to rescue himself and needed a helping hand to get back in his boat.

At 6.00pm we paused in our activities to remember Bernard with affection, were silent for a time and drank a toast to him.

In the evening 9 of us went to the Eagles pub for a meal in a village I haven't a chance of spelling but very Welsh. The night was cold with brilliant stars and both Saturn and Jupiter very visible.

I felt Sunday was going to be different; it was colder and not quite so clear. We met at 10.00am and were on the water by 10.45. The course was interesting, a broad reach to the start line and then a dead run down to one of the mid channel buoys. This was a close race. 7 of us rounded the first buoy together. The tack back up to a buoy on the north side of the lake separated the outriggers from the others and I was settling down to being in a bunch of 5 or so after Steve in the lead and Dave Stubbs in second place. I rounded the start buoy for the second lap in 6th place but we were all quite close. Just before the turn from a run to a tack the wind jumped up a few notches, which suited me with my weight.

I left both Ian and Jim behind and had a close tussle all the way back with Rod. Keith was creeping up and I thought that Wally had become becalmed on the north bank. At one stage I was clearly in 3rd place behind Dave and on the same tack. The normal gremlins crept in, however. Wally took off, Rod made a better tack than me at the last buoy and I finished 5th. It was a great weekend and many thanks to the organizers.

The afternoon race was a short sailing/paddling race there and back in breezy conditions from a beach start. The outward leg was under paddle and the return under sail. A big difference in paddling speeds was seen from the start and then the leeway while rigging sails was another big factor.

(Of course, mine had to get caught up and remained twisted all the way back.) A close finish from Steve and Dave and then Keith and Walter showed a variety of designs doing equally well. We must always keep our hands in at the paddling aspect. It's always needed and often when things go wrong. A big thank you to Ann and Eddie for officiating (and getting cold) in the races.

Eddie Palmer and Rod Levene

Ranking - Staffordshire Plate: 1 S Robinson, 1:14.40. 2 D Stubbs, 1:16.38. 3 W Green, 1:23.31.
Sailing/Paddling: 1 S Robinson, 13:08. 2 D Stubbs, 13:34. 3 K Morris, 16:20.

Blowing hard

Coniston Regatta

The wind blew. The temperature fell. Showers dampened. We sailed and paddled, not always comfortably, as powerful gusts swept down from the Old Man of Coniston. On Friday evening conditions were benign but on Saturday a good few of us hesitated to venture out. On our sheltered shore the air was peaceful whereas further out we could see the surface whipped up by the squalls. Eventually 3 outrigger canoes and David Petrie with his K-wing enjoyed a fine trip down to Peel Island, back to Brantwood and then to the jetties by Coniston village. Tyrone Currie, too, was not intimidated by the conditions, whizzing up and down at impressive speed. Later on, a convoy paddled/sailed up to the café. On the return, Louise Haffenden, straining to bend the wind to her will, eventually capsized and was rescued by Steve Robinson whereas I, no hero me, potted up and down near the campsite shore. A plan to practise capsize and rescue was abandoned in view of the increasingly wild conditions.

Our president, John Bull, paid us a visit to promote the participation of the OCSG in the development of an international racing class. In

the ensuing discussion nothing productive emerged. Little enthusiasm was shown for the principle of international racing and objections were posed to the idea of a one design class. A small group of members would need to take part in any relevant negotiations if we are to play a significant role. Whether we have any sufficiently interested people remains unclear.

Keith Morris had repaired the gazebo blown down at Bala which provided a sort of base where we gathered for briefings and signed in and out. Unfortunately it was wrecked by a savage gust in the evening, leaving us with a problem as to a replacement, a not too large tent, a stronger gazebo with windbreak... ?

The committee met in the cold wind.

Sunday was better. The wind had moderated sufficiently for good, sometimes exciting sailing. Peter and Penny Oakley, sporting a single outrigger, set off down the lake towards Peel Island whilst 17 other boats raced. The course was unusual. I only had to tack to round two of the buoys, otherwise it was reaching as we basically sailed up and down the lake twice round a stretched triangle as the wind blew from shore to shore. The main body of racers kept fairly close together on the first two legs. On the third, where the wind became flukier on a closehailed reach towards the windward shore, longer gaps started to open up in the field. The longest leg, a beam reach along the lee shore, provided the fastest sailing, especially in the stronger gusts. The results show that the men are no longer having it all their own way with Jan and Louise coming in 2nd and 3rd. Outrigger canoes took 1st and 2nd, benefiting from the blustery conditions where they didn't heel so much, thus keeping the wind on their sails better. Note how John Shuttleworth in his single outrigger canoe once again gained a respectable position. The competition for 9th to 12th places was close, too.

With Rod Levene in charge, a paddle/sail race was de rigueur after lunch. It began with a Le Mans style start as competitors ran to their boats, pushed off and paddled to the first mark. There they had to raise canvas, sail to and from the second buoy, drop the sail and paddle back to the shore. Rod had given the finish a final twist. On reaching the beach, each gasping paddler had to run across the beach to touch a large oak tree. Keith Morris proved to be quite outstanding although we did confuse his heavy breathing on the final leg with the puffing of the steamboat *Gondola*. Thanks to Dave Thorn for timekeeping in both events.

Sunday ended on a cheery note. It was good to have Chris O'Connor with us, sailing his father's boat. He brought something of Bernard with him. We had a system of signing in and out and ensured that someone was on the launching shore throughout. I'm not sure that the latter always served a useful purpose as one could see very little of what was happening on the water and no new arrivals appeared in the afternoons.

Thanks to everyone who helped to make the meet a success, especially Rod Levene.

Roy Bonner

Ranking: 1 S Robinson, 1:00:20. 2 J Poskitt, 1:00:24. 3 L Haffenden, 1:01:15. **Sailing/Paddling:** 1 K Morris, 11:49. 2 Eyre/Robinson, 13:13. 3 R Levene, 14:22.

International class proposal

Risto Lehtinen of Finland has proposed a class of open canoe for international racing under sail. There is potential for competing against the Finns and Americans, the Hungarians and Slovaks are interested and other countries could become involved. The ICF have given some approval. There is soul searching within the OCSG as to whether to stick to the existing rules and be left out or to accept a larger 5m² sail area and new rules on hull shapes in order to be part of the development.

Lough Erne meet proposal

Tyrone Currie has proposed an open canoe sailing meet for Northern Ireland in 2006. He wants to use Lower Lough Erne, possibly at Castle Archdale.

Classic class at Portland

The world championships for International Canoes takes place in Portland Harbour with racing between 7th and 11th Aug. A new division will be for classic ICs over about 15 years old. 12th Aug will be set aside for the New York Cup, first awarded in 1884 and held by this country since 1993. There will be a corresponding AC race this year for the first time. The event could well be the largest ever gathering of ICs.

Meridian work Friends of Allonby Liverpool Tournament

The national leagues championships, hosted by Liverpool's Friends of Allonby Canoe Club, took place at Dukes Dock in Liverpool in rather cold blustery conditions. However, thankfully the rain stayed away and there was a good deal of intermittent sunshine during both days.

The championships brought together the top seven Open teams in the UK (there should have been eight teams but Derby Rammers dropped out at the last minute) and the top eight ladies teams including Banba, the Irish national team who play in the British ladies Division 1 league.

Each team within their respective leagues played all of the other teams during the course of the weekend with some very closely fought matches to entertain the many visitors to the Albert Dock complex.

Probably the key matches in both leagues were the encounters between the Liverpool based Friends of Allonby teams and Meridian from London. In the ladies competition Friends of Allonby snatched two early goals but Meridian worked tremendously hard in the second half to grind out a 2 - 2 draw. In the Open league Friends of Allonby took an early 3 - 1 lead but the relentless Meridian attacks pegged them back to 3 - 3 with only a couple of minutes remaining to play. Friends of Allonby retaliated with wave upon wave of attack until Meridian's defence was finally overcome with less than a minute left to play. Friends of Allonby then held out to take the very evenly matched tussle 4 - 3.

This tournament clearly demonstrated canoe polo at its very best, a sport in which Great Britain's ladies are the current world champions and Great Britain men are the current world bronze medallists and previous world champions in 2000 and 2002.

Chloe Nelson

Walsh back on form

Holme Pierrepont Slalom

Olympic silver medallist Campbell Walsh made his comeback from injury at the canoe slalom special selection event for the GB senior and U23 teams which are part of the UK championships at Holme Pierrepont. After the first event of a total of three he dominated by 6 seconds and made it look effortless.

Campbell, who suffered a serious injury to his arm in a freak accident in Penrith, Australia, in April, competed in the men's singles kayak. Although he has been preselected for the GB team to compete in the European Championships being held in Slovenia later this month he certainly confirmed that he is back on top again.

Commenting on his performance this weekend Walsh said 'Although I was not quite as well prepared as I would have been without the injury, it is definitely good to be back and I'm enjoying getting out and competing.'

The competition was exciting and Campbell faced some stiff competition in the men's K1 class that also featured Nottingham's Huw Swetnam. Swetnam, aged 24, has firmly established that he is also a strong contender, finishing second. Richard Hounslow will have been satisfied with his third place and should give him confidence since the shoulder injury he sustained in La Seu d'Urgell, Spain, in February.

In the other classes the women's singles kayak was also a fiercely fought selection as well. With GB Olympic medallist Helen Reeves out injured this season, Laura Blakeman, aged 26 and also from Nottingham, stormed to win. Scottish paddlers Kim Walsh and Fiona Pennie also performed well and came second and third respectively.

Stafford & Stone's young Lizzie Neave, at just 17, confirmed her potential and looked very confident, competing for senior selection for the first time and secured her place in the under 23 GB team.

Lizzie's brother, Robert Neave, also did extremely well, coming out on top to secure a place in the under 23 team. Neave's club colleague, Mark Proctor, was competing for his first senior selection in the men's singles canoe, where he was up against proven performers David Florence, Stuart McIntosh and Daniel Goddard. Even though Stuart McIntosh fell behind on the first run after hitting a wave and missed a couple of gates he caught up in the following runs and secured a place in the GB team.

World Class Development programme head slalom coach Andy Maddock commented 'We have a lot of very good slalom paddlers, all of whom have been competing for a place in the GB senior team, but there are only three GB places in each class so there is bound to be disappointment. However, with these teams, in all four classes we have the prospect of pushing for medals in this year's European Championships later this month and again in the World Championships in October.'

Chloe Nelson

Selection: K1WU23: 1 F Pennie, Central/Teva, 54. 2 L Neave, Stafford & Stone, 47. 3 L Donington, 45.
K1W: 1 L Blakeman, Stafford & Stone/PeakUK, 60.12. 2 K Walsh, Central/RasDex, 57. 3 F Pennie, Central/Teva, 54.
K1MU23: 1 R Neave, Stafford & Stone, 50. 2 G Hitchen, Matlock/Reed, 44. 3 T Wakeling, Yat, 44. **K1M:** 1 C Walsh, Central. 2 H Swetnam, 57. 3 R Hounslow, RasDex, 57. **C1U23:** 1 D Florence, Forth, 60. 2 D Goddard, Stafford & Stone/PeakUK, 54. 3 A Marshall, DDUK/Central, 48. **C1P:** 1 D Florence, Forth, 60. 2 S McIntosh, Arrowcraft, 57. 3 D Goddard, Stafford & Stone/PeakUK, 54. **C2P:** 1 Bowman/Smith, 50. 2 Baillie/Stott, 54. 3 Roden/Roden, Stafford & Stone, 52.

Future international slalom venues

It is reported that a mediator is to be appointed for the Dee at Llangollen and meetings are to be set up. Slalomists have been offered the Washburn as a reserve venue for October's international event in case any talks come to nothing. A Robin Hood Cup international slalom has been suggested for Nottingham for late summer.

Tryweryn Slalom

K1WP: 1 L Blakeman, Stafford & Stone/PeakUK, 230.12. 2 K Walsh, Central/RasDex, 240.27. 3 F Pennie, Central/Teva, 254.27. **K1W1:** 1 J Dickie, Selkirk High Sch, 137.74. 2 E Taylor, Bradford & Bingley, 139.97. 3 S Timperley, Green Star, 150.78. **K1WWC:** 1 N Rowlands, Llandysul, 279.31. 2 A Matthews, Llangollen, 289.04. 3 L Menhinick, Shropshire, 312.63. **K1MP:** 1 C Walsh, Central, 213.41. 2 N Caffery, Quickflow/Nomad, 214.48. 3 T Wakeling, Yat, 216.79. **K1M1:** 1 J Coombs, Salisbury, 113.71. 2 T Jones, Bala, 118.30. 3 W Greensmith, Stafford & Stone, 119.63. **K1MWC:** 1 T Wakeling, Yat, 216.51. 2 D Backhouse, Volmolen, 226.20. 3 D Paxton, Llandysul, 226.81. **G:** 1 D Boxwell, WW, 310.39. **K1MVP:** 1 B Grundy, Hemel Hempstead, 312.77. **K1MV1:** 1 N Kelly, CKA NI, 131.54. **C1P:** 1 D Florence, Forth, 226.04. 2 A Marshall, Central/Dundee, 233.39. 3 R Turner, 235.32. **C1.1:** 1 M Wilkinson, Spexhall, 133.78. 2 A Cruickshank, Central, 134.81. 3 D Rawding, Kingston, 137.01. **C1WC:** 1 G Wilson, Advanced Success/RasDex, 274.45. 2 A Jones, 303.78. 3 G Wells, Manchester, 332.46. **C2P:** 1 Roden/Roden, Stafford & Stone, 265.37. 2 Green/Green, Llandysul, 334.96. 3 Wilson/Wilson, Advanced Success/RasDex. **C2P/1:** 1 Wilson/Wilson, Advanced Success/RasDex, 143.54. **C2WC:** 1 Wilson/Wilson, Advanced Success/RasDex, 155.70. 2 Walker/Warren, Llandysul, 341.66. **OffSat:** 1 T Wakeling, Yat, 103.64. 2 R Vasey, Stafford & Stone, 107.46. 3 R Neave, Stafford & Stone, 108.34. **OffSun:** 1 J Coombs, Salisbury, 255.64. 2 Z Franklin, Shepperton, 274.55. 3 M Borwick, 278.21.



Action from the First Division polo finals in Liverpool's Albert Docks complex.



**£183,000 raised in worst conditions ever
9th Wooden Spoon Ford Ranger Gt Lakeland Challenge**

Thirty three teams battled the elements and overcame aching muscles to raise £183,000 for Wooden Spoon and so help rugby's charity continue its work with disadvantaged young people.

Nurses, engineers, teachers, solicitors, rugby coaches, HGV drivers and investment bankers were among those taking part in the ninth annual Ford Ranger Great Lakeland Challenge, dubbed the country's longest, steepest and highest outdoor charity challenge.

Their aim was to canoe the length of Lake Windermere (10.5 miles), cycle 26.5 miles over Wrynose and Hard Knott, the Lake District's steepest passes with gradients of 1:3, and climb Scafell Pike (3,208 ft) in just 12 hours.

The record books were rewritten as a stonemason and leisure club manager from Wigan teamed up with a firefighter from Keighley to set a new Challenge record time of 6 hours 11 minutes and 56 seconds. They were supported by an optometrist from Hebden Bridge, who chauffeured them from section to section in a Ford Galaxy.

A staggering £183,466 has been pledged collectively by the 33 teams taking part, the largest entry list and highest sum raised in the Ford Ranger Great Lakeland Challenge's nine year history.

The coveted Challenge Bowl, awarded for the combination of time and funds raised, went to a healthcare practitioner and clinical aromatherapist from Benson, Oxfordshire, a solicitor from Twickenham and a company director from Berkhamsted in Hertfordshire, who completed the event in eight hours and 30 minutes while raising £10,251.

Individual section honours were awarded to those who set paddles and pedals ablaze to score maximum points in the canoe and cycling elements while event creator Nigel Brindley, a driving instructor from Rugeley in Staffordshire, joined in the fun for the first time and celebrated as his team romped home with the Mountain Bowl in a time of 3 hours 16 minutes and 54 seconds.

There were also awards for the top ranked veterans and mixed team and the individual team pledging the most funds, this year a superb £15,393.80. A Ford fleet team picked up the Best Dressed Vehicle prize and wooden spoons went to the gallant losers!

All the money raised goes to Wooden Spoon, the charity of British and Irish rugby, which lives up to its motto of Stirring Smiles by supporting physically, mentally and socially disadvantaged children and young adults. Spoon is currently funding 52 capital projects throughout the UK and Ireland.

'The weather was truly unkind and unfortunately the mountain section had to be curtailed for safety reasons but everyone's spirit soared when we announced the total pledged and that was just one of several records set this year,' said Tony Richards, deputy chief executive of Wooden Spoon.

'As always we are extremely grateful to Ford Motor Company for supplying vehicles for our teams and marshals and huge thanks and admiration go to the men and women who pushed themselves to the limit in some of the worst conditions we have ever experienced on the Challenge to help us make a difference to children's lives.'

Martine Layland



Martine Layland photographs

Rob Howard photographs

**Tom Gibbs gets highest score ever
Wales Ace Race**

The UK's longest running and biggest adventure racing series, Ace Races, got off to a cold and competitive start in Coed-y-Brenin Forest in Wales over the weekend of April 16/17th.

The race lived up to its reputation for adventure, challenge and endurance with a mix of kayaking, trail running, orienteering and mountain biking. Teams of 4, pairs and solo competitors travelled from all over the country to take part, setting off from a very muddy Ace base camping field, set high in the forest.

With a covering of snow on the hills and heavy showers, Saturday was cold, especially when kayaking on Trawsfynydd Lake. Racers were using a new fleet of sit on top canoes, paddling up to 12km, and also completed trail runs and a forest orienteering stage on the Rhinog mountains before finishing the day with 90 minutes of tricky night navigation.

Then, on Sunday, the race concluded with 5 hours of riding, making use of one of the best mountain biking areas in the country. It was one of the toughest 2 day Ace Races ever.

After more than 12 hours of racing both the male pairs and female solo classes were decided by just one point, equivalent to 30 seconds! The male solo race was dominated by the highest points scorer in Ace Race history, Tom Gibbs (team Saab Salomon) and, in a race where any one of half a dozen experienced teams could have come out ahead, team SleepMonsters won by a clear margin of 100 points.

As the race format allows competitors to choose how much of each stage they complete, all but a few completed the weekend's course and places will count towards series prizes.

The Ace Race 2 day series is supported by Snow & Rock, Ford, Buff, SleepMonsters, Sigg, High 5, Exposure Lights and Anquet Maps.

Rob Howard





Rob Howard photographs



Reeves runs in charity team

Helen Reeves is to take part in a Radian B Sporting Celebrities team to run the British 10km London Run at the beginning of July. Out of action with an arm injury since the Olympic Games, this has given her a target and will help raise money for Muscular Dystrophy.



Si-Ling Pang photographs

Helen Reeves has also joined young canoeists in the Royal Docks at Newham in order to support the London bid for the 2012 Olympic Games.

Surf's down

The BWSA lost the second day of the Woolacombe contest to flat conditions. They also lost the Freshwater West competition for the same reason and it was no better on the rerun date.

Alpine marathons

The Austrians are inviting entries for their Inn Marathon on Sep 17th. It is open for kayaks and canoes [00 43 5223 56269]

The Italians are running a second marathon on the Adige on Oct 16th. Distances are 25 and 35km and classes male and female K1 and K2, wild water racing kayak and C1 and C2.

BDA times of change

BDA president Kent Hayden-Sadler has stood down, to be replaced by Anthony Trotman, and Nigel Leigh has replaced Brian Hoare as vice president. Treasurer David Cogswell is to retire next year, as will chairman Mike Haslam although he will continue as CEO. 2004 was a difficult year, the sport losing £2,900 on the national championships at Holme Pierrepont and a comparable sum on the European championships at Stockton, where support fell short of the number of teams who had booked to attend. On the other hand, the BDA have received an extremely generous donation from founding president Oliver Cock for a Premier team trophy for the National Cup competition.

Marathon

53rd Bedford Marathon

K1LgU10: 1 L Duffield, Chelmsford, 19:40. 2 C Day, Leighton Buzzard, 22:26. 3 E Ewington, Leighton Buzzard, 23:35.
K1LgU12: 1 H Walkington, Chelmsford, 20:12. 2 K Faulkner, Leighton Buzzard, 20:13. 3 A Pinnock, Bishop's Stortford, 20:54.
K1.3: 1 D Pendle, Norwich, 1:38:10. 2 J Surrage, Bishop's Stortford, 1:39:41. 3 K Moule, Chelmsford, 1:39:44.
K1.4: 1 R Lines, Norwich, 1:05:20. 2 S Rainey, Leaside, 1:05:21. 3 A Epps, Norwich, 1:05:38. **K1.5:** 1 C Preston, Hemel Hempstead, 1:05:51. 2 O Shephard, Chelmsford, 1:06:06. 3 D Slight, Leighton Buzzard, 1:06:48. **K1.6:** 1 R Sawyer, Waveney Valley, 1:11:44. 2 R Barkway, Norwich, 1:13:41. 3 C Sharp, Waveney Valley, 1:15:56. **K1.7:** 1 M Mapeley, Leighton Buzzard, 39:39. 2 M Bartoli, Leighton Buzzard, 39:50. 3 M Hall, Bishop's Stortford, 40:13. **K1.8:** 1 M Mills, Leaside, 40:09. 2 I Green, Barking & Dagenham, 40:56. 3 M Matterson, Leighton Buzzard, 41:20. **K1.9:** 1 M Ryan, 42:09. 2 A Wright, Bishop's Stortford, 42:23. 3 N Carside, Leighton Buzzard, 42:30. **K2.5/6:** 1 Martin/Martin, Leighton Buzzard, 1:04:21. 2 Pendle/Hayward, Norwich, 1:04:22. 3 Hunter/Bee, Norwich, 1:04:55. **K2.7/8:** 1 Duncan/Graves, Bishop's Stortford, 38:20. 2 Whitehead/Parker, Chelmsford, 38:46. 3 Goodlad/Guy, Leighton Buzzard, 39:08. **K2.9:** 1 Hicks/Allen, Norwich, 41:54. 2 Cayford/Cayford, Bishop's Stortford, 42:04. 3 Osborne/Williams, Leighton Buzzard, 45:15. **Club:** 1 Leighton Buzzard, 223. 2 Norwich, 222. 3 Bishop's Stortford, 207.

Freestyle

Nottingham Contest

G<18: 1 F Meares, 496. 2 H Brand, 119. **B<12:** 1 A Layton, Northampton, 181. 2 D Bain, 52. **B<15:** 1 R Montandon, 791. 2 J Soper-Dyer, 191. 3 S Allinson, Nottingham, 168. **B<18:** 1 D Bainbridge, 745. 2 B Brayfield, 219. 3 J Noblett, 172.
Ranking list leaders: **G<12:** 1 T Hargreaves, 30. **G<18:** 1 H Brand, 57. 2 F Meares, 30. **B<12:** 1 A Layton, Northampton, 60. 2 D Bain, 27. **B<15:** 1 B Brayfield, 56. 2 J Soper-Dyer, 50. 3 N O'Callaghan, 47. **B<18:** 1 J Noblett, 55. 2 D Bainbridge, 30. 3 G Addicott, 27.

Washburn Peak Challenge Contest

K1W: 1 C Stone, Northampton, 24.0. 2 C O'Hara, 10.0. 3 M Crisp. **K1M:** 1 E Smith, 114.0. 2 J Bebbington, 120.0. 3 R Sellers. **C1:** 1 O Castle, 229.5. 2 J Burbeck, 76.5. 3 D Broderick.

Close competition in Lakes

N England Ace Race

The second stage of the UK's longest running and biggest adventure racing series, Ace Races, took place in the Lake District over the weekend of June 4/5th with Ace Base at Low Wray campsite on the shore of Lake Windermere.

There was a strong entry from all over the UK in classes for teams of 4, pairs and solos and the competition was one of the closest ever. All the competitors began the weekend's competition in torrential rain and low cloud on a trail run over the Old Man of Coniston before undertaking a 5 hour mountain bike ride in Grizedale Forest. They finished the first day of competition around midnight after a 90 minute night navigation challenge in the woods on Claife Heights.

In better weather on Sunday the final two stages were a 12km kayak endurance stage on Windermere and an orienteering run on the tricky terrain of Loughrigg Fell.

After almost 12 hours of racing the results could not have been closer. The mixed pairs class was won by just 2 points (with a total of 1,649) and third place in the team category was a tie on points with a 10 minute time difference deciding the result. Male pair winners Jonathon Emberton and Phil Scarf scored 2,076 points, just 6 points ahead of Russ Ladkin and Jeff Powell-Davies.

In the male solo class two members of Team Saab Salomon fought a close battle with Steve Birkinshaw beating Tom Gibbs, who failed to find 2 checkpoints on the last stage, losing the race. In the team category the winners were KIMM Lite/High Five and the only all female team, Buff Endure, finished 10th from 16.

Rob Howard

Youth polo dropped

The Golden Shot polo competition is no longer to be part of the Youthfest at Stockton on Jul 16th. Primarily the national bell boat championships, it will still offer a slalom test.

Paris ahead

An internet survey of 21,261 users in 38 countries by marketing information provider A C Nielsen suggests Paris has 30% of the vote for the 2012 Olympic Games with London and Madrid next on 16% each, Moscow on 13%, New York on 11% and 15% not accepting any of them, particularly in Latin America. Paris had 81% home nation support, London 68%, Madrid 57%, Moscow 87% and New York just 44%. London's main supporters are Ireland, Australia and New Zealand while Paris is backed highly by China, Belgium and Greece. The IOC decide on Jul 6th.

Classified

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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Perception Pirouette general purpose/WW kayak (yellow). Suit med/large paddler. Airbags, platform rest, padded backrest, large comfortable cockpit, effective slip on skeg. Excellent condition, hardly a scratch. Playboater Workdeck. Lendal Archipelago paddle. B/aid. £260. 023 8040 4863 (Hants).

Nordkapp HS sea kayak, yellow deck/white hull. Retractable skeg. Ocean cockpit with neoprene spraydeck. Small round forward hatch. Large oval rear hatch. Hand operated bilge pump. Electric pump. Fitted good quality compass. Decklines and elastics. Stored indoors since new. Only used 5 or 6 times in last 3 years. Genuine reason for sale. In excellent condition, a well loved boat. £900.00 ovno. Terry West, 01903 815571 (Sussex).

Old Canoeist magazines, Jan 1991 to Dec 2004, only 6 missing, around £380 face value. Plus 38 copies of *Canoe Focus* from no 39, summer 1985, to no 82, April 1993. £45 or best offer, buyer collects. S Yorks area. T 01909 564544. E martin.burgoynne@tesco.net. Seems a shame to burn them.

Streamlyte KW7 classic slalom kayak from 1960s, surprisingly good condition. Green Resin Seamaster, stable sea kayak with twin skegs, gelcoat delamination needs attention, has seen better days but has been paddled more than halfway round Britain. P&H Surphski, toe straps, long seat pan predates seatbelt concept. Capel Canoes Bat, end grabs missing. Bellway Fusion, can be rowed, sailed or used as stable windsurfer, little used but needs attention to two splits on hull where it has been walked on. All stored outside. Ring for details. Offers to clear some interesting items? Buyers to collect. 01235 847270, Abingdon, Oxon.

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CAPTION COMPETITION



Caption Competition 221 winner: Eric Cox, Blyton, Lincs who also suggested 'Love on the Rocks.'

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Prizes on offer include the new Genes advanced white water technique DVD, filmed in Corsica, Italy and Norway and featuring drops, slides, big falls and boofing. Clips are available at www.westgarth.tv.



Caption Competition 222 winner: E Mickey, Hinckley. Trudie Phillips took this picture of stretching exercises during the first Kayakjacko/Olli Grau freestyle camp on the Isar at Plattling.

Back then 50 years ago

- * For the world slalom championships in Tacen Britain hoped to make the top half of the results with our strongest men's team ever and first women's entries.
- * Oliver Cock, Jim Barbour and Mary Farrant rolled for BBC *Children's Hour* TV.
- * Chalfont Park Canoe Club paddled the Wear from Witton to Chester-le-Street but found the recommended campsite had become an opencast coal mine.
- * The Lakeland slalom had to be the first of the season's five ranking events to avoid the haymaking season, Paul Farrant winning with a 50.
- * The PBK 15 was thought to be England's most often constructed boat.
- * The ICF rule of no practice was waived as the water was high at Shepperton Slalom, where Chalfont Park beat the British A and B teams for the second time.
- * The major distraction during the British National Slalom at Barnard Castle was a blonde Lorelei sunbathing on the bank. Bert Bryden was disqualified for being 'rescued' by a spectator turning him the wrong way as he tried to roll.
- * A beginners' slalom at Shepperton was to see 25 points deducted from anyone rolling after the finish, no penalty for swimming as a result of a failed attempt.
- * *American White Water* was launched in emulation of this magazine.
- * The first Australian national slalom championships were run at Penrith.

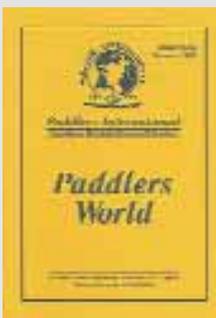


20 years ago

- * Jim Dolan in slalom kayak and Goldsmith/Evans in WWR C2 were unexpectedly left out of national teams by selection committees which included business rivals.
- * George and Sylvie Spenceley claimed to be the oldest and slowest couple to run the Mississippi and George is still giving the lecture.
- * D Radmore hoped to be the first person to paddle from Avonmouth to Southend in one go.
- * A Greater London Council advertisement included the BCU in a list of bodies which would fold if the GLC were eliminated.
- * The Plymouth - Eddystone charity paddle was terminated by shortage of safety support.
- * Killingworth Canoe Club ran their second season long piscatorial competition, a fish needing to be witnessed being caught on a line from a canoe to prove that canoeists do not scare fish.
- * Strong fishermen opposition resulted in the Nature Conservancy Council's abandoning seven proposed marine nature reserves.
- * Duck Mill Weir Slalom course was cut down overnight, believed to be by anglers. Four angling associations refused to meet the Yorks & Humberside Sports Council to discuss their ban of the Swale charity tour.
- * The Italians launched the thick glossy *La Canoa* magazine which was to fold quickly.
- * Paul Vander Molen died from leukaemia. Tony Lee broke a rib when he tried to stop a loose canoe trailer.

10 years ago

- * Llangollen Anglers were threatening to ban Dee Tours unless numbers of participants were greatly reduced.
- * Richard and Myriam Fox and Melvin and Lisa Jones were amongst top names at the new Australian slalom course at Harvey.
- * The Royal Canoe Club took on additional premises and a rowing club.
- * Granta were in liquidation, owning such names as Kayel, Ottersport and Tyne.
- * BBC Scotland were filming some of their *Big Country* outdoor adventure series at Whitewave on Skye.
- * The Old School event in the Cuervo Thames Rodeo included Al Collis wearing a colander as a brain protector.
- * Martin Plain was prepared to email rodeo information to those who had the technology to receive it.



- * When charity race crew Gear/Hardy reached Westminster their colleagues in relay paddled the boat back to Devizes.
- * The Malaysians were planning an equivalent of the Caltex Avon Descent.
- * The canoe lifeguards were to hold their first white water championships on the Tryweryn. Following the exhibition move to the NEC, polo were to have stand alone national championships.

- * Jevan Berrangé was planning an over 50s expedition to the Okavango Delta.
- * The Soviet Union, with a sixth of the world's land mass, was littered with unrun rivers.
- * River Rats, active in Manchester and Nottingham as well as London, were to run a *10 Slides in 10 Minutes* competition with hilarious consequences.
- * Paul Caffyn was seeking a European distributor for his *Dreamtime Voyage*.
- * American advice was given on the problems of changing in public to Ms Notta Stitch.



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They would not listen; they're not listening still -
Perhaps they never will.
Don McLean