

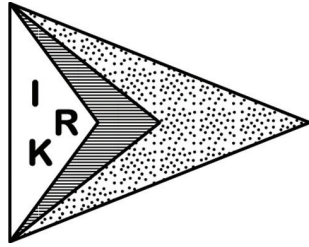
Old Aberdeen photos

The Aberdeen Press & Journal features historic photographs from Past Times. A recent subject was canoeing in and around the city, 13 pictures from Chris Jones (Baillie) in 1969 to a group in 1990. See <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/past-times/4056047/canoeing-through-the-years>.

Rescue issues

A Parliamentary debate on revised SAR helicopter service contract terms has resulted from the leaking of proposals. Of particular concern was the readiness expectation of the Sumburgh helicopter to reduce from 15 minutes to one hour, also the proposal to unify the fleet to a single model, meaning that finding of a fault at some future date could result in the grounding of all rescue helicopters simultaneously. It does seem that some basic errors could be reconsidered. One positive to come out of this attempt to provide a better service for less money is the additional helicopters for the Lakes and Nevis in season, primarily for mountain rescue.

Asked in a Parliamentary Written Question about rescue boat funding, Guy Opperman gave a figure for 104 boat charities. In fact, a large proportion of recipients on the list were mountain rescue, search and rescue and beach rescue teams. Only a small minority went to lifeboat operators, of which there are over 50.



Since then the ICF has grown enormously and has increased its membership to 171 national federations.

The celebration will reach its peak at the ICF Congress in Antalya this November, where there will be a centenary celebration evening.



Alistair Carmichael Wilson

1939-2023

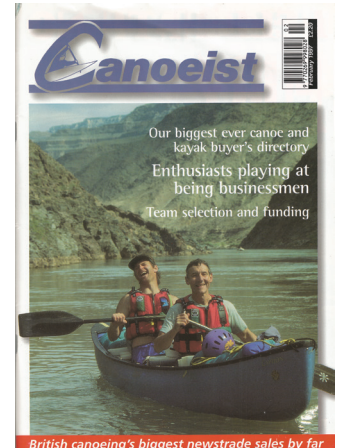
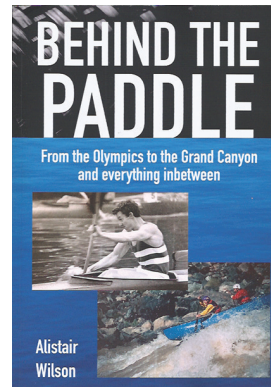
Born in Kolkata, Alistair lived much of his life around Ayr and particularly loved Lendalfoot on the Ayrshire coast.

He was primarily a sprinter, although this expanded into marathon racing and even some wild water racing. He did much of his training off the coast in a sprint kayak in weather conditions which were often far from conducive, in pre health and safety days. Alistair was anything but overstated yet he was uncompromising in everything he did. This took him to the Tokyo Olympics, where he raced K1 and K4 over 1km. Four years later he was in the K4 again for the Mexico Olympics but not the K1 although his selection time would have given him 4th place in the Olympic final.

Ayrshire was well off the beaten track as far as sprint was concerned and Alistair had to pull together a group of enthusiasts. With most of his important activity between Birmingham and London, some of the most gruelling side of his sport was the frequent drives south, sometimes less than a week apart because of his work, in the days when the M6 was still under construction.

Alistair's training methods were unconventional and extreme, such as running up mountains. While training was frequently on the sea, there were times when it was simply too dangerous but anglers were refusing to let him use the local rivers for Olympic training, even when conditions were too rough for them.

A civil engineer by profession, Alistair switched to making paddles and found the inevitable conflict between his business and his sport, accounting for some of the necessary journeys between Ayr and southern England. Working with his father, his ethos was that the product had to be perfect, even if that introduced



some unconventional thinking. Early Lendal veneer paddles were produced with the aid of a letterpress and a concrete mould. Alistair produced the world's first GRP shafts, later carbon fibre, the first split paddles and four part paddles and handled the issues of composite blades, cranks, aerofoil blades and more subtle curves of shaft. Each time the product had to be perfect. His sketches show his own style, precision and attention to detail. There was even some diversification into cycle parts.

Having given up competing in order to concentrate on the business, Alistair felt the need to return every few years. Just a few weeks of training were enough to put him back at the front each time. Training methods included altitude training with regard to the Mexico Olympics.

It is easy to forget that Alistair's paddling on the sea in a K1 gave him a lot of experience in handling rough water.

He was invited to take part in expeditions. Perhaps the most unlikely was paddling an open C2 down the Grand Canyon. He also undertook a sea tour on the Newfoundland coast with bears, whales and glaciers.

He had a can do attitude, made his own luck and understood the importance of his family. He is survived by his wife, Marianne, children, Andrea, Samantha and Stuart, and his grandchildren.

STF

George Cherry

1933-2023

George Cherry was a sports lecturer at Hatfield Polytechnic, now the University of Hertfordshire, and had a particular interest in wild water racing, his students including Ross Pearton and Fiona Mitchell. He built a number of WWR kayaks, including the Tornado with Avoncraft, but also put together some kit cars, another interest. The Ouse Handicap Race in Bedford was one of his ideas. He worked with the British youth team and, later, took youngsters to events such as the Lerida Rally in Spain.

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