

Ewe boat

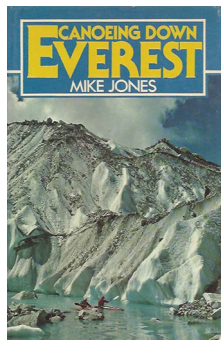
In 2021 Jill Turner from Brora saw a ewe trapped at the foot of a cliff on the Cromarty Firth. This year she was concerned to see the sheep still there after at least two years. A petition for rescue attracted 52,000 signatures online. Rescue has now been carried out by five farmers and shearers who abseiled down the cliff. In fact, she was in good condition, a bit fat, so her weight did not help the rescue, nor did her excess of wool, needing to be sheared. There has been a subsequent demonstration by animal activists who were planning their own rescue but were beaten to it.

Mike Jones famous

Six more paddlers have been added to the 55 already included in the International Whitewater Hall of Fame. Among them is Mike Jones, Rupert to his friends. Mike ran his first international expedition to the Inn when he was 17 with full coverage in one of the newspaper weekly colour supplements. His descent of the Dudh Kosi began with paddling on the world's highest water, an icebound lake at 5,300m on Everest. Later expeditions included the Orinoco and finally the Braldu, where he died attempting a rescue, not helped by having a camera attached to his helmet.

Mike did not take himself too seriously. On one occasion he and I undertook the only international white water Lilo race down Grandtully, Mike only slightly hampered by having his leg in plaster, taped inside a polythene bag. For a while he had a daytime job in Birmingham as a doctor and a corresponding night shift in Bradford, commuting between the two. Few could have lived at that pace for long.

He did invite me on one of his Himalayan trips, to take photographs rather than for my paddling ability. I will, however, claim credit for insisting he write the Everest book, which could easily not have happened.



Mark Markham

Mark Markham was secretary and chairman of Leeds Canoe Club for many years. When the Yorkshire & Humberside Centre of Sporting Excellence was established he was appointed director of the canoeing section. The club already had a nucleus of top slalom and wild water racing paddlers, including the Witter brothers, Vic Brown, John Macleod, Alan Edge and Jerry Hibble, and the clubhouse was used as a training facility by England slalom squad members. He encouraged some paddlers to study at Leeds University in order to train at the club.

Mark was the national chairman when I first joined the slalom executive and he was always at top division slaloms, camping as was the order of the day and helping to run the events, warmly wrapped in woollen gear and wearing trademark brown hiking boots.

Largely forgotten was an experimental slalom he ran at Linton Locks to his own rules. Some did not catch on, such as having three runs instead of the usual two, but others were picked up and included in slalom rules used internationally today.

STF



Early days: Mark (top left) with Chris Hawkesworth and John Fell.



Mike Jones on the Orinoco.

ISKA returns to John Ramwell

John Ramwell did not found the Advanced Sea Kayak Club but was asked to take it over within the first year, eventually changing the name to the International Sea Kayak Association. Peter Salisbury founded the Long River Canoeist Club in 1975, later Paddlers International, and ran it until forced to stop because of ill health. Nobody else was prepared to take it on so John agreed to incorporate it into ISKA. There was a degree of overlap between them and both had useful directories of members, circulated in Britain and beyond before the days of GDPR.

In 2004 John called for somebody to manage the combined body before his move to Newfoundland. Again there were no offers so we agreed to take them on, incorporating their magazines into *Canoeist*. Inevitably there were changes. I did not continue the directory or organizing trips and symposia but tackled troubleshooting issues, such as agreeing a safer route in and out of Portsmouth harbour with the Queen's Harbourmaster. Trying to get a safe route past Foulness was less successful, in fact, not successful at all. The major issue was the Marine Conservation Zones that were being prepared. I attended the head office in Warrington and meetings in Bangor, Llandudno and more than once in Newport. Not only was I the only paddler present, usually ISKA was the only recreational interest at all. At one meeting in North Wales there was only ISKA and somebody from the offshore energy industry, if I remember correctly, faced with strong environmental interests. Some were relishing Reference Areas, from which all human activity would be excluded to see if wildlife preferred it, a concept that has still not gone away entirely. At a later date some BCU employees did become involved, we heard, and the RYA were



present in Newport. The concept of 'in case we are right' took precedence over what was actually known. The planning groups were disbanded before resulting implications for users of the sea were revealed to the public.

As well as *Canoeist*, substantial guidebooks have been published, including to estuaries, the coast of Scotland and the coast of England and Wales, sold through mainstream bookshops and many to non paddlers.

John has now returned from his wanderings and ISKA has been returned to him as the person most associated with ISKA, both here and abroad. Paddlers International remains with *Canoeist*, where its most important function has been trying to obtain the truth about river access legislation from those most keen to keep it hidden.