

'The ICF's input into the organisation of the World Championships was very little, if any, apart from the provision of the actual Championship Medals. The lack of a written brief from the ICF on Championship procedures and protocol was the cause of some concern, especially regarding the Medals Ceremonies and the Closing Ceremony.'

That strikes a chord. Becky and I were in charge of the medals for the Canoe 81 slalom and WWR at Bala. At the 11th hour we had a visit from Sergio Orsi, newly appointed, who turned the whole ceremony on its head. The young TV news cameraman from Bala, who had spent six weeks planning the ceremony, resigned on the spot and I recall watching him walk away across the school playing field, head down, almost in tears. However, Mike later found Sergio to be the ICF president who did most to help dragon boat racing.

Mike had been involved with the British Olympic canoe sprint team in 1976 and 1980 but for 1984 he was appointed as quartermaster for the entire British Olympic team.

The book explains how he became involved with an oriental activity that had been practised for 2,300 years and developed it into a modern sport, setting up the British Dragon Boat Racing Association, European Dragon Boat Federation and International Dragon Boat Federation, involving a number of boat builders working to standard specifications and establishing national bodies in many countries. His workload was phenomenal, preparing documentation, designing race programme schedules, visiting locations around the world and generally moving things forward. This is a sport with its epicentre in Asia yet he was based in Britain and able to earn respect internationally.

He mixed with household names including John Denver, Geoff Capes, Princess Anne, Seb Coe, Des Lynam and Wills and Kate, the latter both involved already in dragon boat racing. David Train is included with his bell boats and paddles for life. Mike thinks it was a piece of information he was able to pass on to Seb Coe on the eve of his bid presentation that might have tipped the balance in Britain's success in obtaining the 2012 Olympics. Yet he is entirely unassuming when mixing with people of all sorts. China is the origin of the activity, with millions of supporters and public holidays for dragon boat racing but he was able to be accepted.

Mike publishes *Dragon Sport News* regularly online and mentions *Canoeist* as helping him in the past although he fails to name *Flat Water*, a magazine he published for several months around 1981 to balance our *White Water Magazine*.

Dragon boat racing is inclusive. Paddlers from countries of which the politicians are publicly shunned are welcomed, including a combined North and South Korean crew who won in the 2018 Asian Games, unthinkable in other sports.

Sadly, there was a racist incident when an American paddler threatened violence against Leila Ataei for being Iranian. Leila, a former member of the Iranian slalom team, is the IDBF's medical expert and the early information she published on Covid was, I believe, better than that put out by anyone else, government or otherwise.

Worse is the theme running through most of the book on the ICF's attempt at a hostile takeover of dragon boat racing, still active but added to by unwanted attempts to take over further sports, having dropped reference to sitting in canoe shaped boats in order to grab stand up paddleboarding. The main problem for the IDBF is the lack of funding from official sources because the ICF claim they are the governing body, issuing statements that are sometimes totally false, such as the claim that all 140 ICF federations run dragon boat races. Lack of IDBF recognition by the IOC despite repeated applications over a number of years is also unacceptable. The IDBF's 2018 world championships in Szeged, Hungary, drew 6,100 competitors, over 60% of the number of competitors of the entire summer Olympics, yet the ICF, who have had to cancel what they claimed to be the world championships more than once because of lack of entries, including this year, still claim to be the governing body. Mike has been central to the setting up of the Association of International Paddle Sports Federations and the Alliance of Independent Recognised Members of Sport in an attempt to counter this behaviour.

There is analysis and results for all major modern dragon boat contests given here.

Logistics finances are a serious issue when it takes 22 people to fill a boat and a major event might require moving over 100 people half way round the world. Some countries have had to pull out of world championships because they could not afford to attend. Four teams did not start when Mike ran the third world championships at Nottingham in 1999, the first outside China. On the other hand, charity races prove successful. Gable Events had raised £25,000,000 for British charities from dragon boat racing by 2020.

The book is interspersed with the unexpected, including ice dragons. Not met in this country, some racers are fitting their boats with skis for racing on ice.

Then there is the plain inexplicable. When stationed at Kineton, there were some farm buildings that had been involved in the Civil War Edge Hill battle, which staff found eerie and military guard dogs refused to enter on the anniversary of the battle.

Mike finally considers the future of dragon boat racing.

User Manual & Product Catalogue



Wessex Resins & Adhesives
2021
A5
57 pages, paperback

Although this is a product catalogue, over half of it is a detailed guide to use of epoxy, particularly for the marine industry. That includes a section on woodstrip canoes. Eminently practical, it uses such terms as syrup, ketchup, mayonnaise and peanut butter to describe consistency of mixes.

It begins with safety, then cleaning up, then every use of epoxy that you can imagine and a few that you can't.

The Ultimate Guide to White Water Rafting Holidays



The ultimate guide to whitewater rafting holidays

The expert low down.

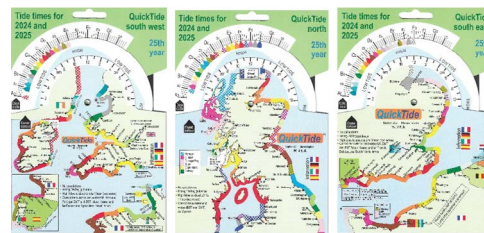


Water by Nature
A4
29 pages

A promotional booklet for Water by Nature's commercial, white water, multi day, rafting trips around the world, this free download is useful for those on kayak trips with raft support. It is also of value because of aspects to be considered if you are anticipating a trip without raft support.

Food, drink, sanitation, health and insects are discussed. A selection of destinations around the world are introduced with grades, times of the year and some excellent photographs.

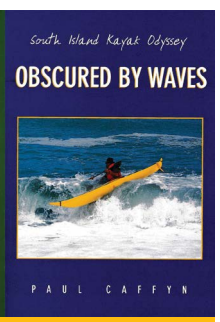
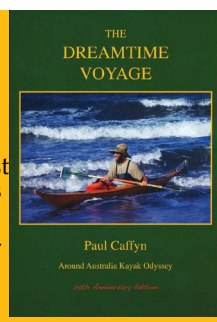
Safety is covered, with safety kayaks being the most important aspect. For those wanting something less extreme there are also inflatable kayaks.



The QuickTide charts have been issued again for the 25th year.

Paul Caffyn Classic Kayaking Books
Now available in England, both the Australian and South Island books.

Sadly, the exorbitant cost of overseas postage has killed off mailing these A4 size books from NZ. However, an old work colleague, Mick, loads up his hand luggage



after he visits NZ annually. He has already sold out of the recent 2nd edition of the Stewart Island book but the two classics are available in England from: paulskayakbooksuk@gmail.com