

heading up a community entitled Slalom in Scotland, communicating via a WhatsApp group. The clubs are working together but asking what they get from PS, with whom communication seems to have broken down completely. Owen says that relations with Grandtully Estate are very positive. Otherwise, some heads need banging together.

At their February board meeting it was announced that board members were not to have telephone conversations or online meetings with anyone in slalom on a one to one basis and that anything written would be signed SCA rather than a personal name. A meeting for officials from slalom clubs but with Slalom Committee members excluded was held at 9.30am on a weekday and there was a full turnout of slalom club representatives.

Women's kit

A BBC questionnaire suggested that two thirds of British sportswomen from the 143 elite competitors who responded faced problems with sports equipment. Too often it was simply scaled down for women from men's kit, frequently making no allowance for women's hips. One respondent was Nikita Setchell. A 9kg slalom kayak is OK for a woman to handle but double that weight for a slalom cross kayak is a different matter. Men's equipment is usually designed first and women may get a variant as an afterthought.

Perhaps assumptions on sizes should go further than this. Some years ago I was measured for an item of canoe clothing for review. The company decided I was an odd shape. They measured some other canoeists and discovered that we were all an odd shape, shoulders too big relative to hips when compared with the rest of the population.

Freestyle feedback

An extensive survey of needs for expanding freestyle showed 42% of clubs wanting help with freestyle coaching and 37% saying that lack of coaches was a barrier to participation. Lack of kit or the price of it was another barrier and a gender bias was working against female involvement.

There have been some successes with the four year plan. Increasing numbers have been undertaking freestyle coaching, coach numbers are up and data for supporting clubs has been improved. A volunteer database is in place and being kept up to date. Funding has been increased when other PUK funding is being cut. Other issues need more work doing on them or have still to be addressed.

The Freestyle Committee constitution, first drafted in 2007, is still being tweaked.

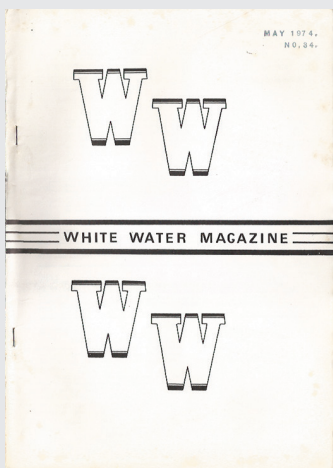
The ultimate catamaran

From Kata Kanus to Bell Boats, pairs of open canoes or similar have been joined together for greater stability. Akko Dolphins have now taken this a stage further with pairs of dragon boats offering the potential to get nearly four dozen boaters out on the water together. This not just about stability but also allows coaching to be viewed close up.

Prince William aboard

During his trip to Singapore Prince William visited and paddled with the British team. He and Kate are no strangers to dragon boat racing and their presence is always welcomed.

Back then



50 years ago

- * Editor Vic Brown noted Fingal (the symbol of the Corps of Canoe Lifeguards) had been Down Under but playing his tricks on foreigners for a change, the slalom and wild water racing team coming back with good results from the Commonwealth championships in New Zealand.
- * Extreme weather for spring slaloms saw Bala with snow, Appletreewick with high water and Grandtully with brilliant sunshine.
- * Easter Grandtully was run by Edinburgh and Aberdeen clubs on a shorter course than usual, finishing above the bridge and proving popular, but the summer event would not take place as the Slalom Committee insisted it must be run by a single club.
- * Yellow Master Class bibs were revealed for slalom with a large 'M' on front and back.
- * My feature on the hydrology of the Welsh Dee and Tryweryn was reprinted from *Canoeing Magazine*.
- * Two canoeists on a Welsh river were stung after treading on a bee's nest, swam, were ordered off the river by an angling bailiff and had to hitch a long way to their car, dressed in wet neoprene shorts.
- * A Europa Cup was instituted with six events each for slalomists and wild water racers to fill in between world championships which were in alternate years.
- * I took issue with a team selection policy that had included me rather than Norman Jackson, who was obviously faster.

* The WWR calendar had 17 events in four months, meaning support was too thinly spread, but the Dee Race in November had 320 entries while an entry of 200 would be reasonable for an organizer.

* WWR boats were delivered to customers at the Serpent's Tail but lost or wrecked within minutes. Slalomists needed to present Certificates of Competence.

20 years ago

- * Ruth Holdway, who had Hodgkin's Disease, was one of the organizers of an attempt at the world's longest game of polo to raise funds for cancer charities.
- * Several enthusiasts ran a first rate freestyle event at Hurley, intending to expand it to a Thames Valley Paddlesports Festival the following year.
- * Construction was to begin on Whittingham Watersports Centre, Norwich.
- * Terry Storry had died in a climbing accident, Drew Delaney was sorely missed and junior freestyle team member Eleanor Rutter was drowned in New Zealand during a gap year tour.
- * Defra's funding to British Waterways had not included any inflationary increase for three years so 140 BW staff were to be made redundant.
- * At a lecture at HR Wallingford on the Hampshire Water Strategy Hampshire's principal environmental officer could not name any stretch of inland river in the county that small boats were permitted to use and was not considering any improvement.
- * Shepperton B weir on the Thames had been redesigned as a 'drowning machine' but Marsh and Sunbury weirs were to be made less dangerous.
- * A plan to block the safe central chute at Stanley was called off after an SCA campaign of letter writing.
- * Old Town, operational since 1898, produced their millionth canoe.
- * A new trade show near Rosenheim, inspired by the former Crystal Palace exhibitions, was to be set up following dissatisfaction with ISPO.

