

**July**  
 5/6 Lord Birkett Trophy, S, IC, Ullswater  
 12/13 Carsington Open, P, IC  
 12/13 Lakes Classic, OC  
 19/20 Medway Dinghy, IC  
 P - Premier. 2 - Secondary. IC - International Canoe. OC - open canoe.

**POLO**  
**June**  
 7/8 3rd Kaniow  
 21/22 Merseyside  
 28/29 Flanders Cup Open Air, Ekeren  
 28/29 Trakai Lakes  
**July**  
 5/6 Hull  
 12/13 San Giorgio di Nogaro  
 12/13 Swiss - Normandy, Thury Harcourt  
 24 - 27 World Championships, SU21 Edmonton

29/30 Dikkebuisse Open Air, Ieper  
 N - national teams. C - club teams. 1 - 5 - divisions. ID - indoors. OD - outdoors. Yearbook £3.00 + 50p P&P from Beverley Dancer.

**LIFEGUARDING**  
**June**  
 20 IRB Championships, Australia  
**July**  
 18 Rescue, World Championships, Deutschland

**DRAGON BOAT RACING**  
**June**  
 1 Bristol, N  
 8 Tuen Ng/Tuen Yang/Poet's Day  
 14 Teesside, N  
 28 Leeds  
 29 Nottingham, N  
**July**  
 6 Preston N  
 16 - 26 8th World Games, Kaohsiung City  
 26 Royal Albert Dock, N

**BELL BOAT RACING**  
**June**  
 15 Islington Boat Club  
**OUTRIGGER**  
**June**  
 27 - 29 Orofero Challenge, Toulon  
**July**  
 20 Tupuna Cup, Frejus  
 27 Porquerolaise, Toulon

**MISCELLANEOUS**  
**June**  
 6 - 8 Beale Park Thames Boat Show  
 7/8 Moira Canal Festival  
 8 World Canoeing Day  
 21 Reading Water Festival  
**July**  
 5/6 Paddle Round the Pier, Brighton  
*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/N - senior/junior/youth/veteran. U18 - under 18.*

# Editorial

There is a certain inevitability about our youth culture and the slide towards street crime. Kids seek challenges and respect. If we close off legitimate activities there will be a push towards antisocial or unhealthy lifestyles. Behind it is much which never makes the headlines.

## Is street crime our fault?

Watersports and other such activities can be part of a solution for many. They test participants and have rules which cannot be ignored but they are fun. I know youngsters who have found various watersports in which they have become achievers, having previously been misfits in team games or in society in general. My local police force have organized summer holiday schools with watersports to keep

numbers of unoccupied youngsters doing something constructive rather than getting into trouble.

Yet we have made it ever more difficult for organized youth activities to exist. Successive politicians have found it expedient to cut budgets to youth groups when funding has been tight without calculating the corresponding cost in damage caused by active youngsters with nothing to do.

The Sports Council's Sport for All is a campaign of the past. The sport funding now seems to be aimed primarily at potential Olympic medal winners.

Whenever there is a significant accident there are calls for action to prevent a possible repetition. Centres have to pay for AALA inspections as a result of the unique Lyme Bay fatalities in 1993. The Health & Safety Executive have their own ideas for enforcing additional safety. Education and other authorities impose anything from restrictions to outright bans, often to protect themselves as much as to safeguard their pupils, I suspect.

Volunteers are essential but in decline. Youth activity groups rely heavily on volunteers to run them but ever more demands are being made of these people and the groups they run.

Ensuring that no child is left alone with an adult as a child protection issue can give logistics problems in some activities. Having parents and other adults alert for unusual behaviour and acting on it if seen is more important checks on past records.

Courses in everything from first aid to coaching skills are all good ideas unless they prove to be too many hurdles for the potential volunteer. A volunteer who lacks skills can be better than someone who decides not to bother at all because of the impositions and because the threats if a mistake is made far exceed the rewards for putting in the time and effort.

Anyone involved with insurance for groups will know that costs have

risen astronomically in the last few years, to the extent that activities with good safety records have had to cease because the insurance costs can no longer be met.

Many people want to take part in risk sports precisely because of the risk, of which there are becoming ever more extreme examples. However, legal interests are demanding that all risk be removed or rest with the provider. For example, the organizers of the Exe Descent for the last 35 years, the most popular canoeing event in the West Country, have pulled the plug as they can no longer face the risk to themselves which would result from a fatality or serious injury. Events which are well organized and which have safety cover which is as good as can reasonably be expected still leave an element of risk. Participants need to be prepared adequately.

Cancel their events and young people will turn in other directions. They may develop their own totally unregulated risk activities. They may turn to antisocial behaviour. They may associate with others who find it easier to disappear from public view than club officials do. They may choose 'safe' indoor activities which expose them in due course to greater risk of death from unhealthy lifestyles.

Along the way we are developing a generation who never have to assess serious risks because doing so is someone else's responsibility. Less challenges result in lower skill levels. You can't become good without capsizeing.

We must return to the situation where we have a right to make mistakes, where an imperfect organizer is better than no organizer at all, where a risk sport where participants can get hurt is preferable to behaviour where bystanders on the street can get killed, where respect results from achievements rather than weapons and where lawyers, insurance companies and the media do not close down adventurous sports without very good reason.

**Stuart Fisher**

One of David Miliband's last appearances as Environment Secretary was to launch a project to allow ramblers to walk the entire coast. At present 30% is still closed to them. When Labour came to power a decade ago there were 200,000km of public footpath in England and Wales, including beside a significant proportion of our rivers. The Government promised to do better. The Countryside & Rights of Way Act introduced a qualified right to roam and now the coast is to be completed as well.

Speaking at the launch in Dover, Miliband said that people had to be trusted. The Government should give people rights and they will act responsibly. This is the way we should take this forward. We need to get people out of their houses. This is keeping electoral promises made to ramblers.

However, electoral promises made to boaters have not been kept.