



# CANEWS

Winter 93/94

## HAWAII IN MINIATURE!

*Surfing Trip To North Devon 3-4 October 1993*

There didn't seem to be a breath of wind in the trees as we drove across to North Devon, listening intermittently to the weather forecast. We refused to be too glum about it. Even if there was no surf we could still enjoy a paddle round the cliffs. We'd set out later than the others - Paul, Graham, Andrew, Pete and Karl - and overshot the final turn off to Saunton Sands. We stopped in the lay-by on the cliffs overlooking the beach. From up here the sea looked like the proverbial mill pond but this hadn't deterred what appeared to be a massive number of canoeists and board-surfers on the water. Indeed, a closer look revealed some smallish looking waves and plenty of surfing going on.

A hastily executed 12-point turn and we were soon back at the car park where we found a note on Paul's windscreen inviting us to "come on down, surf is excellent". We quickly got changed and set out on the trek down the beach. It was a long, long way. Arriving at the water's edge we were reminded once again how deceptive the sea appears from higher up - the surf was a very respectable 5-6 feet. There is also a canoeing law which says that, as soon as you sit down in the boat, the waves double in height - which they promptly seemed to do!

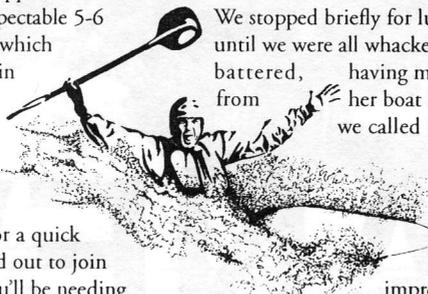
This was Jaqui's first real experience of surf so Paul took her off for a quick lesson by the shore while I paddled out to join Graham. He greeted me with "you'll be needing your roll", a prediction which later proved to be correct.

Paul's promise of "excellent surf" turned out to be understatement. The surf was glorious, almost perfect. "It's like Hawaii in miniature", someone was heard to exclaim (Well OK, it was me and OK I haven't been to Hawaii). There wasn't a grass skirt or even a patch of blue sky in sight but the waves were the best I've experienced. They came in very distinct sets separated by periods when the water was almost flat. They were very steep, held up by the offshore breeze, and every ride seemed to go on and on and on. Eventually I would think "it must

have broken by now". But glancing backwards the wave would still be perched high above my head. When it finally broke, there was no mistaking it.

Paul had settled on Saunton as our venue quite late on, on the advice of a couple of friends from the Sea Kayak Group UK, who had local knowledge and joined us on the first morning. Many thanks to them for such an excellent recommendation.

I felt sorry for our board-surfing colleagues who could only catch one wave per set while we canoeists could usually manage at least two rides, paddling frantically back out and turning quickly in front of a big one. But paddling back out was an experience in itself. The waves were steeper on the back side than the front. The usual smack in the chops going over the top was followed by a juddering slap as you dropped into the trench behind. One of our number who shall be nameless (except to say that he has a beard and a bit of a reputation as an old "surf-dog"), after displaying considerable skill on the front of a wave on the ride in, on paddling back out dropped off the back of a wave and promptly capsized!



We stopped briefly for lunch, then kept on surfing until we were all whacked. Even Jaqui was feeling battered, having managed several wet exits from her boat in 18 inches of water. So we called it a day and set out for Ilfracombe and our B&B. We stopped to look at the surf on all the other beaches on the way, and at one point saw a rather impressive display by someone in a surf shoe, including some nice 360 degree turns on the face of the wave.

B&B was, as in previous years, with John and Anne at 'Seagulls'. What a lovely couple. They really know how to make you feel welcome and at home. Even the local fox is made to feel at home and we were all able to watch him visit for his nightly snack. The welcome, the food and the superb location on the cliffs overlooking the famous Victorian 'Ilfracombe Tunnels' make this establishment a place worth returning to. Pete and Karl joined us there, having diverted on the way to spend the day river paddling. I wonder if they will ever really

believe us as to how good the surf was that day?

In the evening we had a walk round the town, stopping for a drink and a look at the harbour. Eventually we settled on an Indian restaurant where we dined well and were kept amused by some games with matchsticks, courtesy of Pete and Karl.

Sunday dawned with little wind and a calmer sea. We drove round to look at the different beaches but in the end decided to return to Saunton. Although nothing like the day before, there was enough surf to provide an enjoyable day on the water. Karl had a great time mastering the wave ski and Pete cut his usual suave figure in the Spud. "Ah, you should have seen it yesterday...", we kept reminding them.

All in all, a great weekend. Jaqui and I will definitely be going again on the next surfing trip to North Devon. We're not quite ready for Hawaii-proper.

Larry

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### SEA PROFICIENCY THEORY COURSE

This course will be held on Tuesday evenings from 20.30 to 21.45, in the bar at Ringwood Recreation Centre. The first night will be on the 25th January, prior to the second session of the beginners course. The course will probably span some six evenings (not necessarily in contiguous weeks) but we will see how things pan out.

We plan to cover the following topics:

- Boat types and various design features.
- Equipment and kit, and how to carry it.
- Tides and their prediction.
- Wind and its influence.
- Waves, understanding them and what they can do to you.
- Charts, what they show and how to use them.
- Simple navigation techniques for planning a trip and when on the water.
- Knots.

Please contact Barry if you are interested.

### SAFETY AT MUDEFORD

Concern has been expressed by various members regarding the level of safety at regular club meetings on Tuesdays and Sundays at Mudeford.

Because these meetings have a variable attendance the level of experience also varies. Some club members have been paddling here regularly for six years and should be familiar with all potential dangers. Those members might not be present however, and you might find yourself the most experienced paddler within the group.

When deciding where to paddle you should always take account of the following factors:

1: *Weather Conditions.*

- a) Wind strength and direction. Will it blow a group out to sea after an incident? Will it tire novices, particularly on the return journey with a following wind?
- b) Air temperature. Are all the paddlers dressed to endure the trip?
- c) Will the weather deteriorate? Watch it constantly.

2: *Sea Conditions.*

- a) Will everyone be able to cope with the waves?
- b) What will the waves be like where you are going? e.g. the other side of Hengistbury Head, or out of the lee of the head towards Highcliffe. You may need to assess them as you proceed.
- c) Will the sea state change, perhaps with a change of tide or because the wind is increasing?

3: *Tidal Conditions.*

- a) What time is high/low tide? Check the tide tables posted on the parking attendants' hut.
- b) Will novices be able to paddle back against it?
- c) Will there be any water in the run when you get back?

4: *Daylight.*

- a) Will it last long enough for the slowest paddler to get back?

- b) Is there any leeway for delays or will an accident have to be coped with in darkness?

5: *Equipment.*

We are normally close to civilisation here so the equipment required is minimal, but nevertheless important.

- a) Are you adequately equipped to cope with any foreseen problems?  
b) Is everyone else adequately kitted out?

6: *Size and Strength of Group.*

- a) How many are there? Keep checking!  
b) What other experience is there in the group? Will you have to cope with an accident on your own?  
c) Has everyone got sufficient stamina for the trip? Keep an eye on the group and watch for signs of tiredness.

This might seem to be a long and tedious list of things to check through mentally before you go for a casual evening paddle, but when you are fully aware of these factors it takes only a minute or two to assess the conditions. Some members will doubtless be unaware that these things are given consideration, but I can assure you that they are, at least by some of the more experienced members, and that the safety of the group is constantly on their minds.

In addition to these general considerations, you should always be wary of the following hazards at what is otherwise a very safe canoeing playground:

1: *Boats moored alongside the quay.*

These are potentially lethal in a strong tide. A canoe swept against one will capsize and the paddler will probably become pinned or entangled in the propeller, out of reach of rescuers. Keep away from them unless you are fully confident in your boat handling.

2: *Boats passing through the Run or harbour.*

Don't get run down - it will hurt!

3: *Surf, particularly when dumping (normally the case around high tide).*

Wear a helmet and know your limitations. Keep away from rocks and groynes.

Keep away from surfing boats when you are paddling out.

Buddy up with someone and keep an eye on each other.

4: *Strong offshore winds.*

It might look calmer outside the harbour but it won't be calm further out in the bay. Stay close inshore with novices and make sure you have your towline.

5: *Clarendon Rocks.*

A line of rocks placed by Lord Clarendon who was planning a new harbour entrance. They extend over 200 metres out from Mudeford Spit towards the Isle of Wight. They are unmarked but exposed at low tide, and usually shallow enough to bang your head on if you surf and capsize over them. Turbulence in the water usually indicates their location.

6: *Beerpan Rocks.*

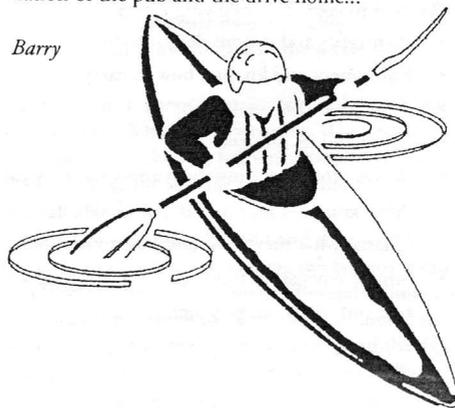
A shallow ledge just beyond the end of Hengistbury Head Groyne. Steep breaking waves occur here when the wind is against tide.

7: *Fishing Lines.*

Difficult to see, particularly at dusk. Using tall rods and heavy bottom tackle, the anglers often keep their lines taut and therefore above water for an amazing distance off the beach. A line across the throat may panic and upset an unwary paddler.

This is by no means an exhaustive list but includes the most common dangers. Remember that canoeing is a very safe pastime compared with the combination of the pub and the drive home...

Barry



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## BRECON WHITE-OUT

*Perth y Pia trip 21-22 November 93*

We arrived on a cold, starlit night; the Red Lion at Llanbedr was packed but the beer was up to its usual standard. On Saturday morning we were away unprecedentedly early after a good breakfast, but unfortunately Matt was directionally challenged on the way, which delayed our start somewhat. But at least this allowed the day to warm up before we started our paddle.

The water levels were low, so we had a bumpy ride to the first falls, doing break-ins/break-outs on the way. The first fall had an awkward shoot on the right hand side and provided the first bit of fun - Albert giving us an early demo of capsizing and boat exit procedures, whilst I auditioned for Paddles Up by shooting my paddle through an overhanging tree!

On to the second falls which we all shot - Jaqui triumphant. The bumpy ride continued with lots of valued instruction from Lyn and Pete, the latter encouraging us to canoe on our sides! Played games of ride the stopper (great) and spot the dead sheep (boring). Fun high, incidents low - along with the temperature (our gear froze when we got off the water!). Weather was bright and clear. Some 5 hours and 15 miles on the water (we had paddled from Sennybridge to Brecon).

Back to Perth y Pia for a wash, change and chat then off to the pub for booze, chat and - eventually - food. I think the meal was cooked on a Bluette stove. Ian and Nickie joined us - it was good to see them again. Larry tried to run over about 20% of the club on the way back to base, but was allowed to pass upon agreeing to getting a hot drink ready for the walkers.

Awoke next morning to SNOW!! Enjoyed another good breakfast, discovered the drying room had worked well overnight, and soon had the finances sorted out. Nick ran out of food bags. (Editor's note: damned careless planning).

After putting Matt in the centre of the convoy, we arrived early at the bridge at Llansantffraed near Talybont-on-Usk (which for some peculiar reason isn't on the Usk at all, but on the Monmouthshire

and Brecon Canal!) and soon found a good jet to play on. Received more super training from Pete and Lyn on forward and reverse ferry glides. Managed good demo of wrong edge and capsizing on latter - thankfully, Pete came to the rescue.

Again a bumpy ride on low water. Richard got pinned near the top of Mill Falls, but was luckily next to the bank and was able to get out and free the boat. Nick capsized on the middle section of the falls when Barry distracted him by pointing out a potential rock pin - Pete to the rescue again.

Several search and rescue helicopters passed over us, one hovering to check us out. They were looking for a 'chopper' that had crashed in the Brecons during a snowstorm (sadly, we later learnt that the pilot had been killed). We were accompanied down river by one or more pairs of Herons, and spotted Buzzards, a 'small, black furry animal' and many Dippers.

Arrived all too soon at Llangynidr, 4 hours and 5 miles today, weather more overcast, slight snow during the day, lots of icicles on the falls.

An excellent weekend, well done to those paddling white water for the first time and many thanks to Pete and Lyn for the tuition and their company.

Thanks also to Nick and Barry for all the 'behind the scenes work', and to the absent Steve for handling the booking - hope the Exe descent proved to be fun.

*Graham*

Postscript: There's a report on the Exe descent from Steve, elsewhere in this issue of Canews.

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## CANOE EXHIBITION

*19th and 20th February*

Just a reminder that the Canoe Exhibition is back at Crystal Palace this year. Saturday: 9.30 to 18.00, Sunday 9.30 to 17.00. Tickets (in advance from the BCU) £5.30 for adults, £2.75 for under 16s. At the door: £5.80 and £3. Collude amongst yourselves - shared transport is cheaper transport.

## NOTES FROM SCOTLAND

Some jottings from Barry's diary, covering a canoeing trip that he and Bev made to the west coast of Scotland in August 1993.

*Sunday 1.8.93*

Left Ringwood at 04.45 hrs, Breakfast at Stoke, Lunch at Ecclefechan. Viewed scenery at Glen Coe, arrived at Arivegaig, Kentra Bay 17.45 hrs - 13 hour drive! 570 miles. Camped by the end of the road at the mouth of Allt Beithe, lovely place, natives friendly.

*Monday 2.8.93*

Woke up to strong wind and pouring rain. Could not face packing the boats. Walked round the bay to the west. Lots of waders. Had to wait for the tide to come back in so we went shopping at Acharacle for food, boots and a waterproof coat! The sun came out for an hour so Bev fell asleep. Paddled away at 15.30 on the incoming tide. Very calm but with a long 3 foot swell from the S.W. camp sites hard to find. Midges unbearable on the mainland so camped by Castle Tioram on a small island with people in 3 Canadians. 2 deer joined us on the island at 22.00 hrs, having walked across the sand at low tide. Paddled 13 km.

*Tuesday 3.8.93*

Got up at 07.00 hrs, still raining and midges invaded. Paddled to the entrance of Loch Moidart in mirror calm water, spectacular scenery. Then out through the North Channel past Eilean Shona. Eilevenses on Shona then north to Loch Ailort. Big seal on a rock in Glenuig Bay. Several guillemots in Loch Ailort entrance, also curlews, sandpipers and arctic terns. Camped just inside narrows at 15.00. Rain stopped. Paddled 23 km. Lit the first fire! Bev caught some ticks (Editor's note: the things people eat on camping trips!). Sat in the tent and made two midge nets to go over our hats.

*Wednesday 4.8.93*

Left camp in a hurry to escape the midges. The nets worked well. Paddled round the Ardnish Peninsula and caught two small fish. Light wind from S.W., slight swell. Stopped for coffee break at head of Loch Beag and the rains came. Matches wet, lighter ran out, finally got the stove alight and a warm drink made. Good view of the steam train. Saw about 20 seals on rocks of the Borrodale Islands (an Garbh Eilean). Also terns with young, black back with young, black guillemots. Wind went round to N.W. so flat calm along south coast of Arisaig peninsula. Stopped at first beach of white sand, Camas

Drollaman. Beautiful beach. A seal came to investigate and two black throated divers. Bev bathed in the stream and Barry cooked fish in the rain. Pathetic fire, no dry wood but a good meal of rice, corn, mushrooms and fresh fish and mussels. 2 whinchats on the beach. Paddled 24 km.

Also today: Sandpipers (common), redshanks, curlews, oystercatchers - everywhere, arctic terns, eight red deer stags together on a ridge - lovely sight.

*Thursday 5.8.93*

No canoeing today. Early morning walk to look for otters - saw none. Sun came out! Hung out the wet clothes and went for a walk over the Arisaig Peninsula. Saw red deer, butterflies - meadow browns, large whites, scotch argus, fritillaries and blues, also a buzzard. Back to camp after lunch and Bev washed her hair in the stream (mad). Cooked dinner and went for another search for otters - still none. Wind went round to West and calm at the camp so midges arrived. Seal in the bay again. Lovely low but rugged scenery. Spectacular views of Ardnamurchan, Muck, Eigg, Rhum, Skye - with the tops of the Cuillins in the clouds all day, and in the evening we could even see Coll and Tiree. No rain today!

*Friday 6.8.93*

On the water at 08.30 and it started raining. Wind F3 from South. Paddled North round the peninsula into the shelter of Loch Nan Ceall. Saw a small basking shark (about 2 or 3 metres long) on the way in, went to investigate but it dived. Saw an otter and watched it eat about 6 eels, very close view, about 10 metres away. Bought food and a pub lunch in Arisaig. Sent a postcard. Left at low tide in pouring rain and wind F4 from S.W. Paddled around and through a maze of rocks in dismal weather to the River Morar. Pitched tent in rain, cooked soup. Paddled 24 km. Saw: guillemots, black guillemots, slavianian grebes, shelducks, arctic terns. We were investigated at very close range by young herring gulls, nearly landed on my hat!

*Saturday 7.8.93*

Slow start today. Started paddling at 10.00, round the coast to Mallaig. Wind S.W. F3, slight swell. The winds are being very kind to us this week. No rain and even a glimpse of blue sky. Bought food at Mallaig and ate lunch on the quay then went for a swim and a shower at the brand new pool. Left at 14.00 - didn't need cags on! - paddled round to the entrance to Loch Nevis and into the mountains. Very dramatic. Saw a seal on the mainland then another otter fishing in the loch. Wind very light in the loch. Stopped to say hello at the Ardintigh Activity Centre run by Tom Maclean, famed for transatlantic rowing, and sailing



#### FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The following list shows events that we have planned so far for 1994. If an event lacks a specific date or venue, more information will be given out nearer the time.

##### ***Mornings at Mudeford***

*Every Sunday*

Meet in the car park at The Haven, Mudeford, at around 10.00. This venue only changes when the club has a specific event organised to take place somewhere else over the weekend.

##### ***Devon/Cornwall trip***

*22nd/23rd January*

A white water weekend - and highly suitable for beginners. We will probably paddle the Tamar on Saturday and the Barle on Sunday (though day two may see some surfing instead). Our instructor will be Francis Angove, who ran our first aid course last year. We will be staying in the house next to the Delaware Centre - £10 per night B&B. Let Barry know asap if you want to go.

##### ***Canoe Exhibition***

*19th/20th February*

It's back at Crystal Palace! Saturday: 9.30 to 18.00, Sunday 9.30 to 17.00. Tickets (in advance from BCU) £5.30 for adults, £2.75 for under 16s. At the door: £5.80 and £3. Collude amongst yourselves - shared transport is cheaper transport.

##### ***Committee meeting***

*Tuesday 22nd February*

20.00 at the Inn on the Furlong, Ringwood.

##### ***Kennet & Avon trip***

*Sunday 27th February*

A one-day trip on the K&A canal and the river Avon. Meet at Limpley Stoke (where the B3108 crosses the canal and the river, map reference ST782613) at 10.00. We will paddle up the canal to Bradford on Avon and back down the river to the starting point (there are two drops to play on). Bring lunch. BCU members to bring membership cards and licences. Graham for more details if you need them.

more overleaf 

Pool session  
Tuesday 1st March

Ringwood Recreation Centre, 22.00 to 23.00.

River Axe Canoe Race  
Sunday 6th March

A five-mile race from Whitford Bridge (race starts at 11.00) to Axmouth Harbour, organised by Axe Vale Canoe Club. Fee is £3 per competitor, and closing date for entries is 28th February. Contact Steve asap if you're interested.

Pool session  
Tuesday 8th March

Ringwood Recreation Centre, 22.00 to 23.00.

13 River Frome trip  
March

A one-day white water event which is ideal for beginners. We will almost certainly paddle the Beckington to Farleigh Hungerford stretch (several small weirs to play on) as usual, but this is still to be confirmed, as is the exact date. Pete Ambrose for details.

Holme Pierrepont  
March or late April

A mid-week trip, driving up one evening and 'camping out' on Jill Toynton's floor ('94 marks her final year at Nottingham University), and driving home the next, after a day's paddling. The exact date is still to be decided - after Paul's checked that this plan is OK with Jill (who knows nothing about it yet!) - but we plan to avoid the Easter holidays.

Pool session  
Saturday 9th April

Ringwood Recreation Centre, 18.30 to 20.00.

Club AGM  
Thursday 14th April

At the Crown Hotel, Ringwood. All members welcome. Meeting starts at 19.30 prompt, in the Green Room.

24 River Avon trip  
April

Our annual paddle down the local Avon, from Longford Castle to Downton. Barry for details.

Kennet & Avon trip  
April/May

Another one-day trip on the K&A canal, this time around Crofton. Again, exact locations and date still to be decided. BCU members - please bring your membership cards and licences. Colin for details.

Perth y Pia  
4th to 6th November

Our annual whitewater weekend in the Brecon Beacons. Accommodation for this event is already booked, so if you intend going, let Steve know.

Exe descent  
Sunday 20th November

Contact Steve for further details.

in smallest yacht. Looked good. Stopped at Tarbet and camped by the church next door to Donald MacDonald (the last of the clan residing there) and his housekeeper Janet Cameron. Very friendly. Were joined by Chris from France, who had underestimated the Mountains and had hardly anything to eat. Lit a fire on the beach with Donalds logs and ate a huge meal including Donalds eggs - lovely. Beautiful evening, sat on the beach till almost dark - 22.30. Buzzard calling all evening and bats flying. Chris borrowed an oil lamp and slept in the church. Paddled 21 km.

#### *Sunday 8.8.93*

Another day without paddling. Reasonable weather - showers and rain most of the afternoon. Walked over to Loch Morar (fresh water) then back to Donald's house for tea and oaties. Chatted to Janet for hours. Took lunch and walked to Kylesmorar, the narrowest point of the Loch. Met Ian Turner, caretaker for Cameron Macintosh (Musical Producer) who owns the houses there. Very friendly man - drank more tea at his house and chatted a few more hours. Back to beach to cook dinner. Two hill-walkers arrived and slept in church. Donald and his nephew came to say hello and we all chatted in the church till dark.

#### *Monday 9.8.93*

Planned to paddle to the head of Loch Nevis but Bev was not well and we had to get back to Mallaig to the chemist. Ian came in his boat to the bay with the forecast - Westerly F4-5, F7 that night. Paddled to the Narrows but pouring rain obscured our view of the upper loch. Paddled back to the entrance to the Loch, rain cleared but wind increased to F5, with very severe squalls. Had to stop and lean on the rocks at the entrance to the loch, could not paddle against the squalls coming around the headland. Made slow progress back to Mallaig, stopping in the bays as the squalls went through. Wind increased to F6. Decided not to try to paddle further North. I hitched back to Kentra Bay - 3 lifts and 2 hours later, to pick up the car and drive back to Mallaig. Packed up and drove south again, camped by the road near Glenuig. Bev was knackered. Paddled 22km.

#### *Tuesday 10.8.93*

Drove to Glenmoidart. Walked up the valley to the Glenforsa River, round the loch then South to the summit of Creaghan Lochan, 498m. Showers cleared and we had fantastic views all round. Saw a herd of 30 deer and two Ravens. Got wet again on the way back. Camped on a small site by Loch Shiel - cost £1.50!

#### *Wednesday 11.8.93*

Field gate too muddy to drive out. Got a tow from a tractor. Amidst rain and midge attacks, launched kayaks at Dalelia on Loch Shiel. Explored the MacDonalds' ancient burial ground on the island of Fhianain. Stopped on N.W. shore for lunch, no wind so lots of midges. Hurried back onto the water and paddled to Glenfinnan, site of the Jacobites Monument. Browsed in the visitor centre and paddled South again to camp at Guesachan on the S.E. shore. Lovely to have no tides - beach of coarse granite with heather flowering in clumps almost to the water's edge. Had a fire, the sky cleared and we sat out until 23.30 watching shooting stars and bats - no midges! Wonderful, this is how camping should be. Very little wildlife to see on the loch: two sandpipers and a frog. Paddled 24km.

#### *Thursday 12.8.93*

Woke up to complete silence - no wind. Waited in tent in the hope of wind to drive away midges but gave up after an hour and made a hasty get away. After 5 minutes on the water we were paddling into a force 4 breeze! Wind dropped as we went South. Had coffee on a lovely beach on S.E. shore opposite Glen Aladale (where Bonnie Prince Charlie and his mates spent the night a few years earlier, on their trip by rowing boats to Glenfinnan). Fantastic scenery. Bev swam again! - Freezing. Paddled up the R. Polloch through interesting bends and marshes but tree felling spoilt this lunch break slightly. Sheltered spot despite Force 4 winds again. Paddled back to Dalelia against wind about Force 6. Very tough going. Bev declined a tow on principle - a tough cookie. Got to car and packed away as the rain came. Drove to Glencoe but didn't like the campsite price list: £7! Pub dinner at Tyndrum and then camped by a road in Glen Dochart. Paddled 34 km. Total this trip 174 km.

#### *Friday 13.8.93*

Bought a house today. Drove to Glen Lochay and walked up and down the valley - boring up at the head but interesting further down. Headed South at 1500. Stopped to camp in the hills overlooking Morecombe Bay. Lovely clear night - could see for miles, not like Scotland. No midges either.

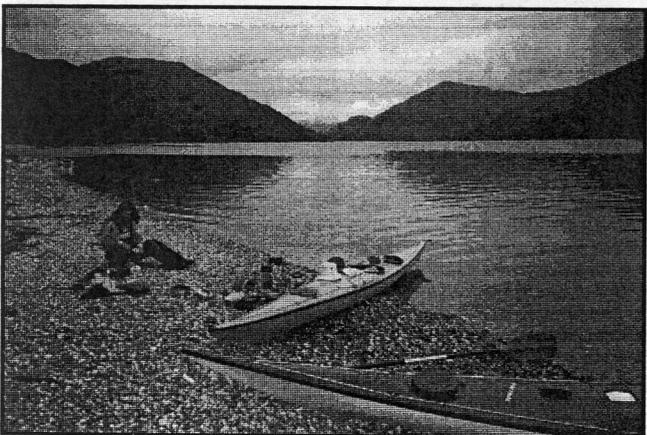
#### *Saturday 14.8.93*

Up early and drove to Fordingbridge. Arrived at the Estate Agents at 1100, picked up the keys to 36 Whitsbury Road and moved in the dirty clothes and soggy canoeing kit. The tent had gone mouldy despite being pitched every night. Better luck next year.

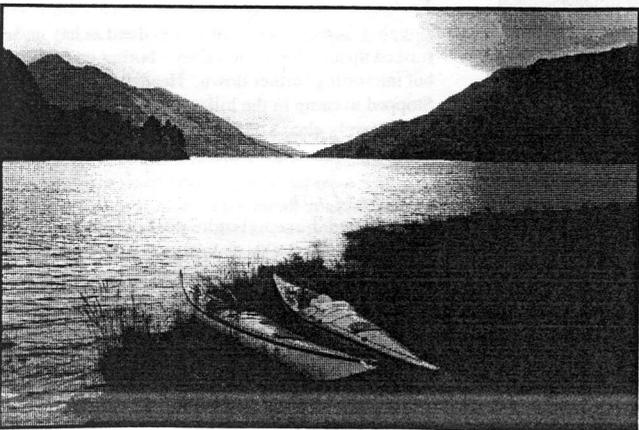
PHOTOGRAPHS FROM SCOTLAND



Kelp forest at low tide



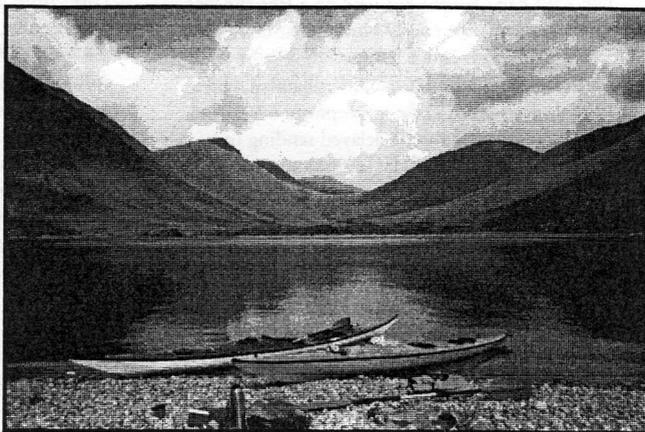
Coffee break



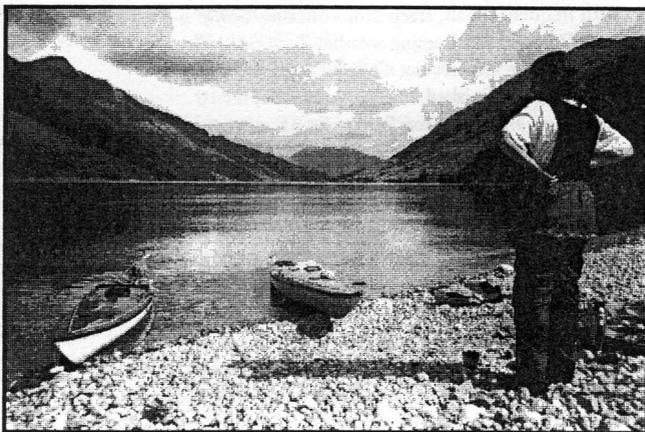
View from Glenfinnan

PHOTOGRAPHS FROM SCOTLAND

Nice view - don't know where



Shall I go for a dip?



## INDESCENT EXPOSURE

The 25<sup>th</sup> Exe Descent was held on a bitterly cold Sunday towards the end of November. Unfortunately, this year it coincided with the Club's annual pilgrimage to Perth-y-Pia, so Steve Sambell had a difficult decision to make in keeping a 5-year-old promise to himself and he delayed sending in registration details until the last minute.

The race is modelled on the Liffey Descent held each September in Dublin but, whereas that river has a controlled release of water from a dam high upstream, the Exe depends entirely on natural releases - rain! Sadly, there was little enough of this commodity during November so the level was extremely low (unlike the '86 Descent of which you may have seen the video!). The event was therefore characterised by long stretches of sluggish water with frequent shoals, steep drops offering 'bump-n-grind' shoots, and freezing weather conditions. It started at the East Devon College, north of Tiverton, and finished 19 gruelling miles and 10 weirs later just below Exe Bridges in Exeter.

Well over 600 competitors took part in several junior and senior classes including K1, K2, WWR, GP Slalom, and one- and two-man Canadians. In class 5A - Senior GP Slalom - some 230 canoeists, with boats and equipment of every conceivable shape, size and colour, amassed for the off. Having witnessed the chaos as the earlier K2 race began, Steve resolved to hang back and avoid the stampede - just as well really because at the first obstacle, 200 yards downstream, the most spectacular log-jam developed with kayaks stacked like sardines all the way up the face of the weir.

Steve managed to avoid most of the perils and pitfalls except on the very last weir. Here, having lost all feeling in his toes at about 5 miles out, his brain and body had finally agreed to abandon communications, so there really was no way to avoid the spike which ripped out the bottom of the boat. Not being aware that he was now in charge of a latter-day Titanic, he paddled the last half mile in a rapidly sinking craft to finish in a time of 3:20:00 and a respectable 23<sup>rd</sup> place, some 22 minutes behind the winner - a Devizes-Westminster specialist!

It is rumoured that Steve was heard to mumble something about 'never again' as he began to recover from a mild dose of hypothermia (thank goodness we'd learnt a bit of First Aid and that Liz was on hand as support crew to administer coffee, food and certain other comforts!) but, within the hour, he was talking enthusiastically about putting together a Ringwood CC Team for '94. This has already been set for 20<sup>th</sup> November (being the organiser for the South Wales trip, Steve has made absolutely certain that another clash of dates won't occur) so - take note - training starts in September and he's looking for 'volunteers'.

[PostScript: The Parrett Team Chase is due to be held on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> March - 3 members per team - any takers??! Please contact Steve for further details.]

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## CANOEING EQUIPMENT

There are no good specialist canoe shops within about 100 miles of Ringwood, but the following list shows suppliers who carry limited stocks of equipment. If you know what you want, mail order from one of these or direct from the manufacturer is always an option.

### *Alpine Wave*

62 Lagland Street  
Poole

☎ 0202-677523

Carries a limited range of canoeing gear, including some plastic boats. Discount to club members.

### *Andark Diving & Watersports Ltd*

256 Bridge Road  
Lower Swanwick  
Southampton

☎ 0489-581755

Very good for wetsuits and clothing.

### *Bobs Boatshop*

428 Bournemouth Road  
Parkstone  
Poole

☎ 0202-736704

Small boat chandlery with some canoes and basic gear, such as helmets.

#### *Camping & Outdoor Centre*

7 Gervis Place  
Bournemouth  
Dorset BH1 2AL  
☎ 0202-558797

Stocks a reasonable range of outdoor activities clothing and equipment, including a few items of canoeing kit (such as dry bags).

#### *Cotswold*

13 Lower Northam Road  
Hedge End  
Southampton SO3 4FN  
☎ 0489-799555  
☎ Fax: 0489-790010

This is a large store in the centre of Hedge End. They stock a wide range of outdoor activities clothing and equipment, including some canoeing kit. They will also order boats from Dagger, Prijon, Perception, Pyranha, etc (don't forget to ask for discounts on boats!). Barry and Nick have copies of Cotswold's catalogue.

#### *D&S Marine*

10 Seddul Bahr  
Allington Lane  
West End  
Southampton  
☎ 0703-473379

Probably the cheapest glass reinforced plastic kayaks in the country. Very cheap kayak repairs. Supplied the club's four Reflex kayaks. No equipment except paddles and spraydecks. Discount to club members.

#### *Scott Bader Centre*

Unit 12  
Fitzherbert Spur  
Farlington Industrial Estate  
Portsmouth  
☎ 0705-210093

Strand glassfibre regional distributor. Canoes and equipment mainly to order, little held in stock. Supplied club's Europa and Falchion. Discount to members.

#### *The Boat Shop*

9 The Colonnade  
Woolston  
Southampton  
☎ 0703-449338

Mainly sailing dinghy equipment, but also some canoeing gear.

#### *The Canoestore*

Queen Street  
Emsworth  
☎ 0243-372234

Specialises in Canadian canoes, but also carries a good selection of kayak equipment. Reliable advice.

#### *Woodmill Canoeing & Activities Centre*

Woodmill Lane  
Swaythling  
Southampton  
☎ 0703-555993

Woodmill now have a very wide range of boats, which you can try out on-site; they will then order for you. There is a 10% discount to club members. Woodmill also has a limited range of other canoeing gear in stock, and give reliable advice. They are BCU-registered, and offer several types of canoeing courses. If you are making a special trip there, it is best to phone first because they don't keep normal shop hours.

If you know of any other local suppliers, please pass the details on to Nick so that we can maintain an up-to-date list.

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### **ROLLING COURSE**

Please remind anyone you think might be interested that we will be running a rolling course at Ringwood Recreation Centre, starting in March. The course comprises six sessions, from 22.00 to 23.00 on Tuesday evenings. People wishing to participate need to register their interest at the centre as soon as possible. Club members are most welcome to help out with instruction.

Dates are: 15th March, 22nd March, 29th March, 5th April, 12th April, 19th April.

PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE USK

