

Arun Canoe Race

This years race took place in early June over the usual course from Fulborough to Littlehampton (20 miles) for doubles, and from Houghton Bridge to Littlehampton (10 miles) for singles. The Unit had a total of eight members entered in various classes. The first to go were Nigel Quiney and Peter Gorny in Class 2B under 18 using the moonraker. They hadn't had a chance to train together, but both were fit and in the first stretch of the race they looked comfortable, holding onto a good place. But then they disappeared around the first bend in the river. Next to go were Chris Olsen and Ewen Anderson in Class 4A over 18 using the Gannet. Both had put in a lot of hard training and they were hoping to make it pay off by finishing well up the order. After a chaotic start where they tried to capsize every other entrant, they settled down nicely into third place. (The chaotic start was the result of some last minute alterations to the canoes steering, which had badly needed tightening.) Ewen and Chris made good progress, but after about a mile they were overtaken by a barracuda, a much faster boat of which there were three in their class. This they didn't worry about as there were still

another 19 miles to go. After another one or two miles they saw Nigel and Peter in the distance. Rapidly they began to catch up. Wondering why, they suddenly realised that both Nigel and Peter were standing in shallow water emptying their boat. Without stopping, a couple of pleasentries were passed between the two crews, while the boat that had overtaken Ewen and Chris was gradually stretching the gap between them. The miles passed by slowly and eventually they spotted the support crew waiting for them at Houghton Bridge. Chris decided that it was time for a quick drink, and thanks to Jeremy Olsens superbly trained crew the Gannet spent less than 10 seconds in the pits refuelling. The gap between the third placed team and the Gannet in fourth place was gradually getting bigger and by the half way stage it was easily a quarter of a mile. No further developments occurred between Houghton Bridge and Arundel, which was the last point at which competitors could check with their support crews, except that the gap between the third placed canoe and Ewen and Chris had again increased. From Arundel to Littlehampton the scenery becomes extremely monotonous and it is here that tiredness can be