



CHE-MUN

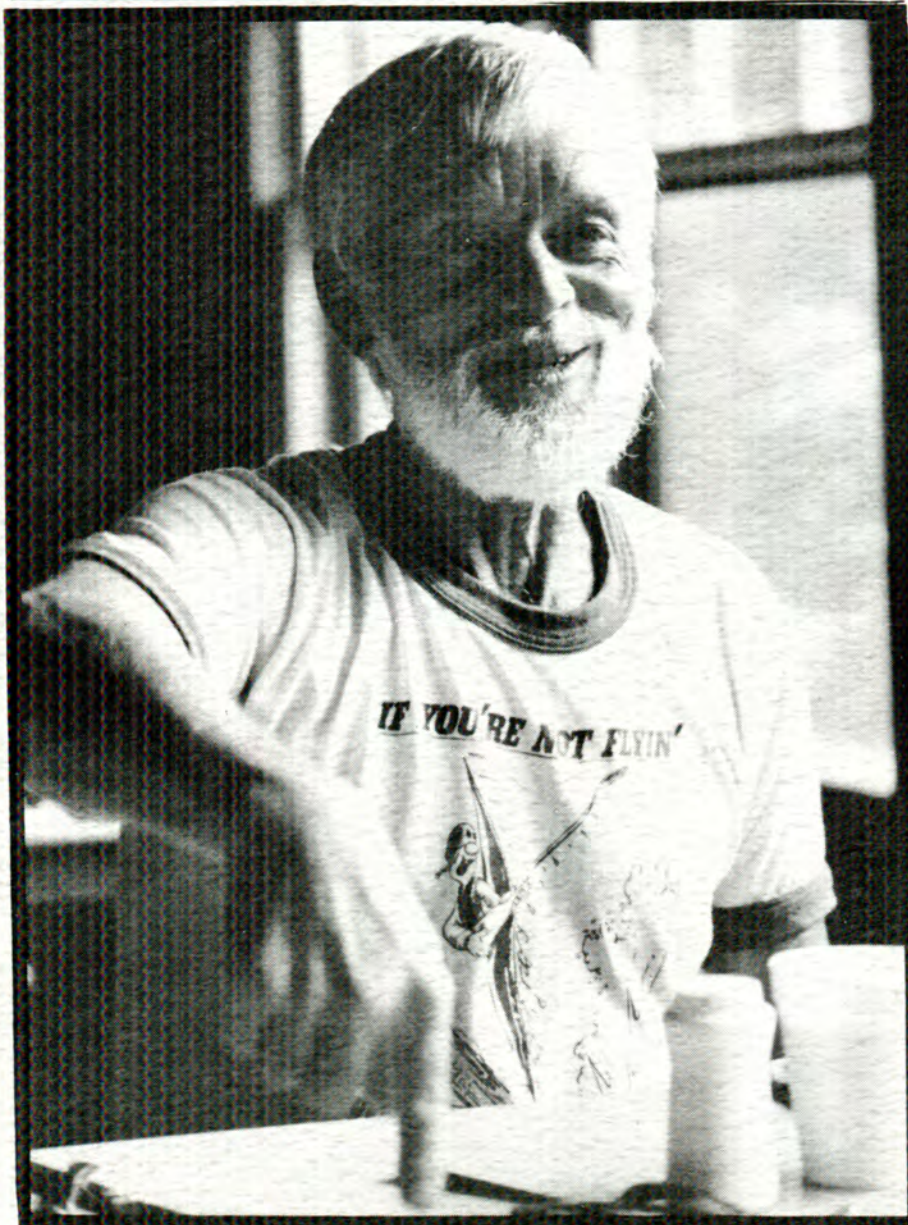
(Ojibway for canoe)

THE NEWSLETTER OF CANADIAN WILDERNESS CANOEING

OUTFIT 55

CHE-MUN

WINTER 1988



BILL MASON



*Memories of
a canoeing life*

Page 6

Twin's
done in



Page 10

Bill Mason had a lot of points to make, like the one he was making here at the Maine Canoe Symposium in 1987. He made them all with great insight, good humour and sincerity. He was a slender giant of a man who cast a long shadow across the world of wilderness canoeing.
-michael peake photo



Winter Packet



Despite the modestly growing number of Che-Mun subscribers - we are getting fewer letters from our readers. This is unfortunate because, besides having to fill this space every issue, we really do enjoy hearing from you; what trips you've done or are planning, your thoughts on whatever is happening in the world of wilderness canoeing that's of interest to you.

So please, write and tell us what you're up to!

One area which we would like to measure reader interest is a proposed new feature - Tripping Tales. We've all had them. Those incredible instances that make your non-paddling friends shake their heads in disbelief and your paddling friends nod theirs in agreement.

Che-Mun would love to receive your best canoe trip happening; like the time you swamped just above Virginia Falls or that three-mile portage - to the wrong lake. If you're still alive to tell the tale we'd like to hear about it.

They need not all be horrific. Whatever special, funny, touching or unforgettable moment you've experienced that makes you know for sure that wilderness tripping is just for you. Please share it with us.

Yet another request for you hard-working Che-Mun readers. Che Editor, Michael Peake, along with canoe guide, and part-time lawyer, David Thompson are working on a book. David is the one who guided the Duke and Duchess of York (Prince Andrew and wife Sarah) down the Hanbury-Thelon route last year. (See Outfit 50.) It is a book about the men who've canoed three of the great rivers of the NWT; the Coppermine, Nahanni and Hanbury-Thelon. (Incidentally Prince Andrew has also paddled all three).

The book will focus on the canoeing history of each river and some of the prominent men who were involved in the initial period of paddling exploration. While we will be examining the native and early European history, the emphasis will be on those who have travelled these rivers by canoe which generally means travel in the last 100 years. These include; John Hornby, George Douglas, R.M. Patterson, Albert Faille, Radford and Street, Rouviere and LeRoux, David Hanbury and many others. We hope the book will reveal more about these interesting explorers and well as make public, heretofore unseen photographs, maps and letters from that period.

If any Che-Mun readers have access to info from 'unusual' sources, i.e. photos, maps, articles, journals, and letters, not from readily available, published books and

articles, we would like to hear from you. We'd also appreciate knowing what type of features you would like to see in a canoeing book of this type. Anyone who thinks they might have something to contribute can write to the Che-Mun address or phone Michael Peake collect in Toronto at 416/463-4240. Your support is greatly appreciated.

One of Che-Mun's most consistent contributors, Blair Richardson, formerly from Edmonton now of Montreal, has written again. Blair enclosed a copy of an article about epic paddler Don Hazelton, who is one third the way through a 32,000 mile kayak trip around and across North America. His route is similar to the Verlen Kruger-Steve Landick journey of a few years ago but without the sponsorship that trip enjoyed. Hazelton, a former Special Forces soldier, will spend much more time and travel the lakes and rivers in greater detail than his predecessors. He started in October 1985 from Montana and is now off Canada's east coast after coming down the Mississippi and up the east coast."

Blair's letter continues, "In the summer I received a copy of the first issue of Arcana Poli from Alan Cooke. Are you going to give some coverage to him in his ambitious launching of a journal of 'commentary and opinion' on the north? Maybe some comments on this would be of interest to Che-Mun readers." (Ed. Note - I know about Alan Cooke and his quest - but I haven't seen his new publication. Somebody send us one!)

Blair goes on to mention that his 1988 tripping plans were cancelled at the last minute when one of their group had to undergo surgery. But Blair adds, "There's always next summer!"

Scott Brown, 222 Percival Ave. Montreal West, P.Q. H4X 1T9 is a new subscriber to Che-Mun.

"I enjoy Che-Mun a great deal. Reading the articles reminds me of the canoe trips I used to make in northern Saskatchewan, Manitoba and the NWT. But now I'm a bit landlocked with responsibilities here in Montreal. Once a year I'm able to get out for a one week trip with my canoeing buddy but we've been somewhat disappointed in the water we've found around Montreal. We've tried southern Algonquin Park and southern La Verendrye Park but have found the routes mediocre and the fishing dismal. Is it acid rain or what?"

"We're hoping to find a route (circuit if possible) with interesting water but also with some nice trout. I'd be very interested and grateful to hear from any Che-Mun readers who have found some good areas close to Montreal."

Good luck, Scott. I have found the following directions to be the best route from Montreal. Go east through the city to the Olympic Stadium, hang a left and drive north - for about 700 miles.

January

The snowmobiles have found the route
Canoe and I once traced
The first one up my lonesome lake
Has peacefulness erased

The ice-hut fellows drink their beer
Where I met summer loon
And lay dead fish upon the waves
Once silver with the moon

To this canoeist, January
Is fireplace and wine
For all that snow is bound for rivers
That will in spring be mine.

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CANOE CALENDAR



CANOE TOONS

PAUL MASON



Editor's Notebook

To carry on

As we wilderness canoeists enter a new year, we leave behind one of the legends of our pursuit - Bill Mason.

Bill is the latest in a series of losses that have left the wilderness canoeing community saddened. (See Memories of Mason on page 6). Eric Morse passed away in 1986, Omer Stringer last summer and then, in October, Bill.

We need not mourn. All three men had full, active and rewarding lives. The contribution of each to canoeing was enormous.

These three have elevated canoeing and wilderness awareness to an unprecedented level, one that would have been impossible without them.

Now they are gone. But, most certainly, not forgotten. Nor will they ever be. As long as canoeists practice their teachings, heed their advice and strive to preserve the wild land they loved - they will be with us forever. We have been left to carry on. As our children will after us.

The Twin Otter, however, is not eternal. DeHavilland Aircraft has ceased production of this fabled plane which became the workhorse of Canada's north - and dozens of other countries around the world. It's days were numbered when larger and more efficient STOL planes took over that segment of the market.

It's another of the well worn traditions that has slipped away. A tattered remnant of the romance of the Canadian northland. Fortunately the Twins were built so well their ancestors will be flying until we've long since mothballed our canoes.

The fact remains - times are changing - as they always do. We are entering a new era of canoeing with the dawn of the 21st century just over a decade away. Let's hope we all carry the treasured and respected traditions of an older time with us. And let's hope there will still be someplace to carry them.

Michael Peake
Che-Mun Editor

The Yangtze: Gorges river

A Canadian will lead the first canoe expedition down the treacherous lower reaches of China's Yangtze River.

"Everest is the top of the world. That is where this river starts. It's *the* river. There's no other like it," said Kevin Darroch who recently signed an agreement in Beijing to do the trip.

Mr. Darroch, an Ottawa man who canoed down the Danube River in 1981, said a 15-member international team will be chosen by eight countries. The expedition will start in July, 1989 at Leshan, in Sichuan Province, midway down the 3725-mile Yangtze, at the confluence of the Min and Dadu Rivers.

Mr. Darroch, 36, hopes it will end 90 days and 2,000 miles later in Shanghai, where the Yangtze empties into the China Sea. From there the team will fly to Beijing in time for the October 1st, 40th anniversary of the People's Republic of China.

The team will navigate the spectacular Three Gorges and paddle through the heartland of China. About 350 million people - one third of the Chinese population - lives in the Yangtze's watershed area. Mr. Darroch said the Chinese had given him permission to make a television documentary of the voyage down the Yangtze, known in China as the long river.

Despite its Chinese meaning, the Yangtze is somewhat shorter than the Nile and the Amazon. Canoeists, however, consider it the most challenging.

The expedition is deliberately avoiding the river's upper reaches. "Take 20 Niagara Falls, stretch them out, narrow them a little, throw in a few big boulders you can't cover with water - that's the upper part of the river," Mr. Darroch said. "Our point is never to do the macho thing. We want to get to Shanghai alive."

Two Chinese teams tried to navigate the upper river in rubber rafts in 1986 - with disastrous results. Nine members died, though some did make the entire distance to Shanghai.

That summer a team of 29 Americans and Chinese also tried to navigate the Yangtze from its glacially-fed source. Their rafts kept capsizing. They quit several hundred miles above the Three Gorges after one U.S. member died of pulmonary-edema.

The Canadian-led expedition will be the first since those attempts. The Yangtze's last 2,000 miles are easier but still somewhat dangerous.

Mr. Darroch, plans to use a custom-made, 26-foot fibreglass and cedar canoe that splits in two for portaging. The expedition will also use two inflatables and a smaller canoe.

The team will have five cinematographers and 10 canoeists. Canada and China will each choose two paddlers, with the remaining six chosen from among seven countries: Japan, Sweden, Britain, Germany, the Netherlands, the U.S.A. and Romania.

The team may be the first and last to make such a trip. The Chinese, with the help of Canadian engineering firms, are considering building the biggest dam in the world at the Three Gorges. The project is mired in controversy but has been approved in principle by the state council. A project of epic proportions, the dam would significantly alter the environment and nature of the Yangtze River.

A search for identity

NWT Name Game

What's in a name? If you looked closely at the names on the map of the vast Northwest Territories you would guess quite a lot. Those names sprinkled across this sparsely settled land in many ways reflect its true character. In the Territories, this seems especially true.

The NWT map is filled with names that bring to mind encounters with nature and hardships endured by generations of travellers through that land. Few maps are so haunted by human struggle and despair.

The naming of the north began thousands of years ago, among the aboriginal people who migrated there from Asia. Over the centuries, they gave names to the rivers and lakes, the animal crossings and the headlands, the plains and the mountains that marked the lands they hunted and the waters they fished.

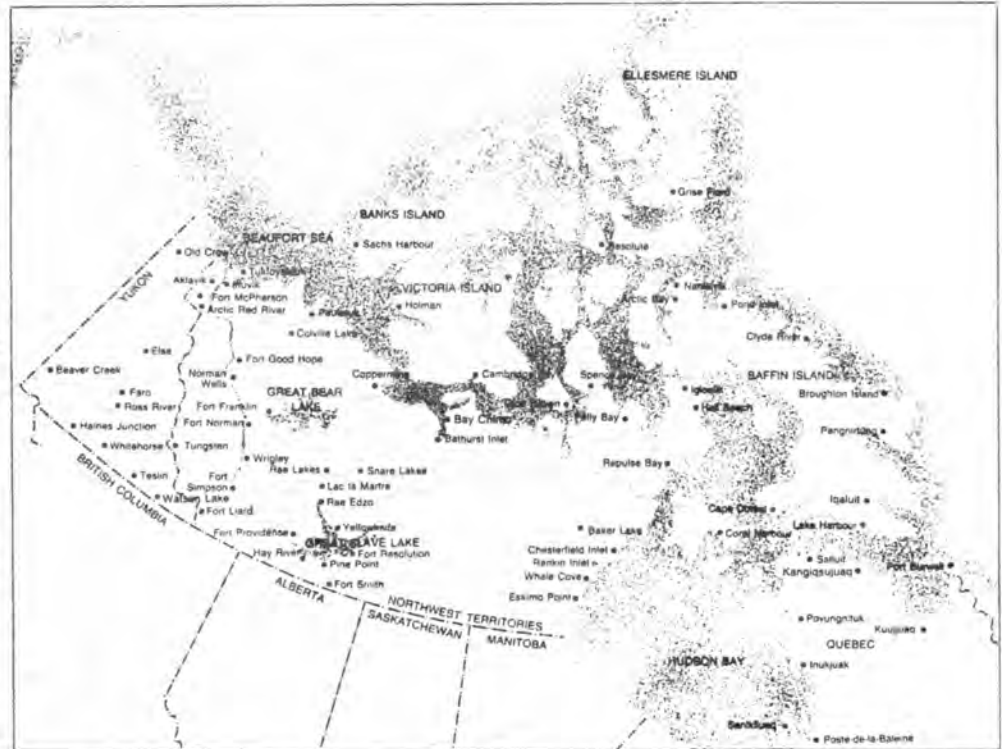
Tradition has brought many of these native names down to the present but only a small portion of them appear on today's maps. Instead we have names recent past; by Americans who came to hunt whales, by Europeans who came to explore, to trade and to establish missions, and by southern Canadians who wanted to govern and develop the north.

From the first, these strangers named the 'unknown' Arctic to honour the eminent in their world; royal personages, statesmen, expedition sponsors and naval heroes.

Of the 15,000 or so official names of geographic features on the Northwest Territories' map, only about five per cent are of native origin. The vast majority of the four and a half million distinct geographic features in the NWT have no recorded names at all.

So, Randy Freeman figures he's got ten years' work cut out for him. Freeman is the NWT's only toponymist, one of ten in all Canada. Toponymists (from the Greek words for 'names of the land') concern themselves with names on the maps.

Freeman moved to the NWT two years ago to set up the toponomy program for the government there. He explains



that the purpose of his program is to recognize the rich history and culture of the native peoples in the north in place names.

"Features are not named in a vacuum, they are closely tied to the culture and history of the area," he says.

Over the next ten years, Freeman hopes to have about 12,000 of the "wrong" geographic names corrected. Of more importance, he says, will be the 100,000 new official names which he says will be added in that time period.

Where will these 100,000 names come from? The answer explains some of Freeman's urgency. The "proper" names, those rooted in the culture and history of each area, are known by the older people.

As an example, Freeman cites four days he spent with George Boots, an elder who lives at the Willowlake River at the junction of the Mackenzie north of Fort Simpson. George has travelled through an area of about 85,000 square kilometres over the past 80 years.

"He's got a map of that entire area in his head," says Freeman with awe. "He knows all the names and why they're called that. We got hundreds of names from him, and he's only one of many people in the north who can do the same for their own areas."

Some names were given so long ago that the words have gone out of use and their meaning is no longer known, an indication, Freeman thinks, of just how firmly rooted these place names are in the culture and history of the area.

Freeman blames lack of fieldwork in the past for the "wrong" names now on the map. During the 1920's and 30's a lot of exploration and development took place. Maps were made from other maps, whatever name was given to a feature by a geologist or anyone else became the official name.

Now, with the power to name or re-name places in the hands of the territorial government since 1984, and a toponomy program in place the NWT map

can become more truly northern.

Freeman acts as an intermediary between northerners and the executive council of the territorial government. Northerners are encouraged to ask that "wrong" names be changed, and to provide names for features without "official" names. Decisions are made by the executive council, Ottawa is informed of the change and the names are added to mapping information.

The names on the NWT map won't change overnight. If there isn't much demand, a map might stay in print for 30 years or so, unaltered. However with the help of computers, things are speeding up. Gazetteers (books of place names) used to be reprinted about every 20 years. Now they're being revised every five years.

Freeman expects there may be opposition to some of the name changes he envisions but others will be widely welcomed. The recent change from Frobisher Bay to Iqaluit reflects local usage and a growing

awareness of a unique Northern heritage, he says. Freeman sees a definite advantage in adopting native place names in the NWT.

"If you look at it from the tourism angle it makes good sense. Tourists don't come here for the climate, but because it's an exotic place, the last unspoiled frontier. Names are only a part of the whole character of the north but that character is somewhat flawed if those names don't reflect the native character of the north as much as they should."

The north that the first European explorers saw must have left a deep emotional impression. The names they gave to the sites they saw reflect joy and sorrow, frustrations and awe, and sometimes even paranoia.

But often explorers named the land in gloomy terms that grew out of their own desperate experiences. Many names reflect strong emotional responses to a land that's baffling, awesome and unforgettable.

The Rapids of the Drowned, Disappointment Bay, Desperation Lake and Starvation Cove recall the ghastly experiences of early visitors, far from the comforts of home.

A great number of northern lakes have to do with death; Grave Point, Lake of the Grave, Coffin Island, Skeleton Valley and Skeleton Creek, Deadman Islands, Burial Island, Skull Creek, Deadman Valley and the Funeral Range are testament to ultimate hardship.

Hunger was often a reality for both native people and early white men, so there's Starvation Cove, Starvation Lake, Starvation River, Hungry Bay and Hunger Lake.

A wild and uncharted land held many perils for early visitors. Dangerous places were given names that sounded like warnings: Peril Island, Danger Passage, Hazard Hills, Hostile Lake, Caution Channel, Bad Weather Cape.

One can well imagine the grim conditions that prompted the naming of Coldblow Lake, Blizzard River, Hurricane

Lake, Gale Point, Icy River, Frozen Strait, Thunder Cove Fury Beach and Foul Bay.

It's an unforgiving land that forged names such as; Repulse Bay, Turmoil Point, Frustration Bay, Defeat Lake, Desperation Lake, Misfortune Shoals.

There were successes, of course, and they are represented by; Victory Point, Success Lake, Perseverance Point, Courageous Lake and Intrepid Bay.

Besides descriptive names there are historical ones. In addition to a variety of royal appendages (eg. Victoria Headland, King William Island), explorers themselves are enshrined-at least for the present.

Sir John Franklin, whose final tragic expedition provided the catalyst for much northern travel has several spots bearing his name. Martin Frobisher who lost a major namesake when Frobisher Bay was changed to Iqualuit still has the Bay in which that town is situated and an island-Frobisher's Farthest.

Sponsors, too, were not forgotten. The Boothia Peninsula recalls the name of Booth gin who bankrolled a British expedition.

Weather makes a big contribution. There are 14 Windy place names (six of them lakes) and 27 places that start with Snow. Thirty eight names begin with Fish, 11 with Goose, 23 with Moose, and 12 with Muskox.

Some of the names are both literal and lyrical. There's Figure Eight Rapids, Hole in the Wall Creek, Sons of the Clergy Islands, River Between Two Mountains and Cascade of the Thirteen Steps.

There are a substantial number of native names on standard maps of the Northwest Territories, some of which have been translated into English. Some survive in their original form such as Tuktoyaktuk, Inuvik and Igloolik.

There are Lakes (Contwoyto, Yathyked), rivers (Nahanni) and even a district (Keewatin).

One name you won't find in connection with the NWT map is Dull.

News & Notes

LAND GRAB . . . The Nature Conservancy of Canada is celebrating their 25th anniversary and you've probably never heard of them. Over the last quarter century this group has purchased 75,000 acres in over 400 parcels of land. This land will be preserved in its original state. To quote from their literature, "Canada has a larger land mass than almost any nation on earth . . . but few ecosystems. And it's frightening to think how few of those we have left in original condition." The Nature Conservancy's new campaign urges people to become members and donate \$25 for which; a membership card, decal, annual report, regular newsletter and tax receipt are issued. They will also use some of that money to buy additional land. As the saying goes, land is important because they're not making any more of it. A valuable lesson and a good idea for those who realize that our earth is a gift from our parents to be passed on to our children. For info or membership write to the Nature Conservancy of Canada, 794A Broadview Ave, Toronto, Ontario Canada M4K 9Z9. Join up. Che-Mun did.

HYDRO HAPPENINGS . . . There's always something afoot with Hydro-Quebec. They're best known for their massive mega-projects in James Bay that send millions of watts of power to the northeastern U.S. Now, believe it or not, Hydro-Quebec is importing power. As part of their newly negotiated long-range power sale to New York that hasn't been finalized, Hydro-Quebec will buy back significant quantities of its own power for the high demand winter months. Quebec has experienced several large blackouts over the last year. The biggest one is still being investigated but is believed to have started at an iced-up power station in Sept-Iles. That breakdown, last spring, plunged almost the entire province into the dark and cost Hydro about \$18 million.

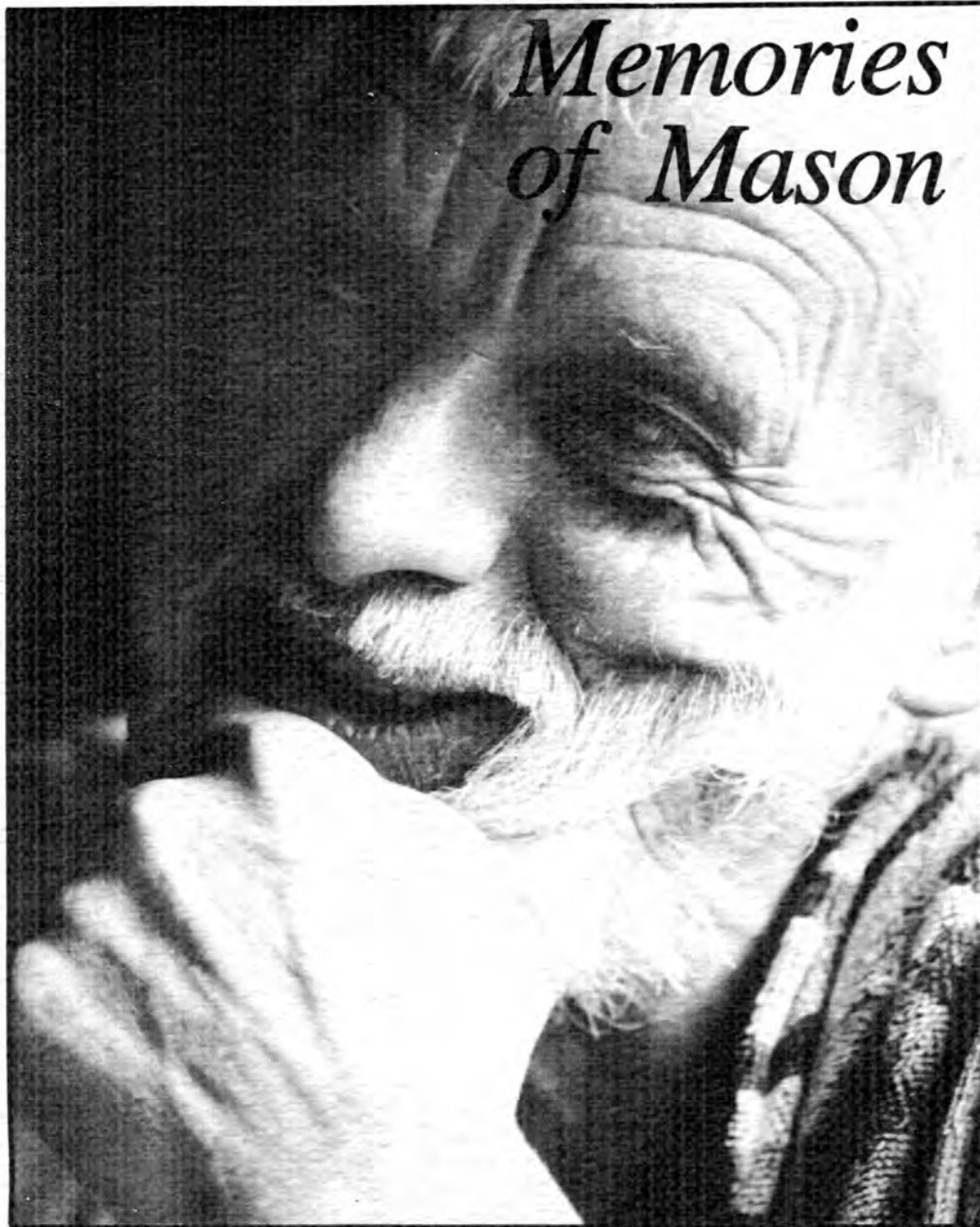
LUSTE IV . . . The fourth annual edition of the Canoeists Slide Fest and Wilderness Symposium, organized by Toronto canoeist George Luste, is growing again. The event, sponsored by the Wilderness Canoe Association, started out four years ago as a living room show at Luste's house that featured a 'Quebec and Labrador' theme. The next year at a bigger venue, 'Keewatin' was discussed followed by last year's 'Far Northwest' at an even bigger hall. Now the 1989 version, 'Northern Ontario', has moved to a full-blown lecture hall at Toronto's York University which holds 450 people, up considerably from George's living room gathering of 15. The same format is maintained: Friday January 27, from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. and all day (9-9) on Saturday, January 28. Speakers at the slide marathon include: Bruce Hodgins (Historical Canoe Routes to the Bay), Bob Davis (Albany River Solo), Hap Wilson (Tema-gami Canoe Routes), Janet Grand & Ron Reid (Poetry of Canoeing) and what should prove to be most revealing, Tija Luste (Canoeing with your Parents). Other rivers covered include: the Severn, Pipestone, Wakwayowkastic and the Ogoki-Albany. In addition the notable Grey Owl incarnation, Phil Chester, will be making an appearance. Registration is \$20 with meals extra. Contact the Wilderness Canoe Association, Box 496, Station K, Toronto, Ontario M4P 2G6, or phone George 416/534-9313.

ON THE REBOUND . . . Canadian scientists are using lasers to study a phenomenon that's literally raising Canada's profile in the world. It's called isostatic rebound, a process that's slowly lifting large parts of Canada out of Hudson Bay. At the rate of a centimetre a year (just under a half inch) the process is creating a new territory equivalent to the size of Prince Edward Island every century. The effect is an ice age leftover. The huge weight of the last glaciers, 8,000 years ago, depressed the earth's mantle and it's still bouncing back. The Geological Survey of Canada is using satellites and lasers to determine the rate and extent of the rebound. Centres are set up in Churchill, Yellowknife and Great Whale River. The only probable effect on canoeists is that your trip will be a bit longer - or that final drop will be bigger!

Continued on Page 11

Page five

Memories of Mason



Bill Mason 1929-1988

Bill Mason is not gone. The body of William Mason, canoeist, filmmaker, artist and hockey player may be buried but his spirit lives on through his superb body of work.

Last spring, Bill Mason found out he had a fatal form of cancer. So he did what came naturally - he went on a canoe trip. He headed to the Nahanni River - again - where he'd been many times. He took his family; wife Joyce, son Paul, 27, and daughter Becky, 25, and they together enjoyed the majestic beauty of that beautiful northern river for a last time.

When Bill got back he started work on another book. *Song of the Paddle* was

finally at the printer's, after some delay, and Bill wanted to start in on another work about his paintings. He'd recently given up the film business after his final feature, *Waterwalker*, was released, and he was devoting much time to conveying the beauty of nature through a palette knife instead of a camera. It was at the end of October that the disease claimed him.

A lot of superlatives are batted about when people die. It is a measure of respect and admiration. No superlatives, however far-fetched, could exceed the worth of Bill Mason.

Some people are major figures in their field of expertise. Others are cornerstones.

Bill Mason was one of the latter. So was Eric Morse. Canoeing has lost both of these major supports in the last two years. But the foundation they helped lay is strong enough to continue.

As an avid wilderness canoeist and canoeing newsletter publisher I'm obviously nuts about canoeing. But compared to Bill Mason I'm a stamp collector. Never, have I met anyone with such an enthusiasm for canoeing. And, bear in mind, this was a man who was constantly bombarded by "paddling groupies" from coast to coast. A man who through countless talks, demonstrations and showings of

his films never lost that excitement and respect for the canoe and the land.

It was that genuine enthusiasm and sincere dedication that place Bill Mason many canoe lengths ahead of the crowd.

A year ago I was fortunate to spend a day with Bill at his home on Meech Lake in the Gatineau Hills north of Ottawa. My brother Sean and I were delivering a canoe to him, a newly made Chestnut Prospector. We arrived on a crisp day in late fall to learn that Bill was across the lake doing some last minute photos for *Song of the Paddle*. His son, Paul (Canoetoons) grabbed a canoe and we followed him across the placid reaches of Meech Lake. It was the perfect method of delivering a canoe.

We shouted hello and no sooner had we touched shore when Bill headed for his new treasure. Even through he was in the middle of a shoot, he jumped into the Chestnut and took it out for a spin. That picture appears in *Song of the Paddle* on page 143 and again in these pages.

It is always a joy to watch something worked by the hands of a master. Seeing Bill effortlessly manipulate the Prospector was thrilling . . . and humbling.

Bill was taking photos of Ric Driediger and the special 'Baker' tents that he makes - see page 30 in 'Song'. We watched, photographed and talked for a while, it was a lovely and calm autumn day, before paddling back across Meech Lake and on to Bill's house.

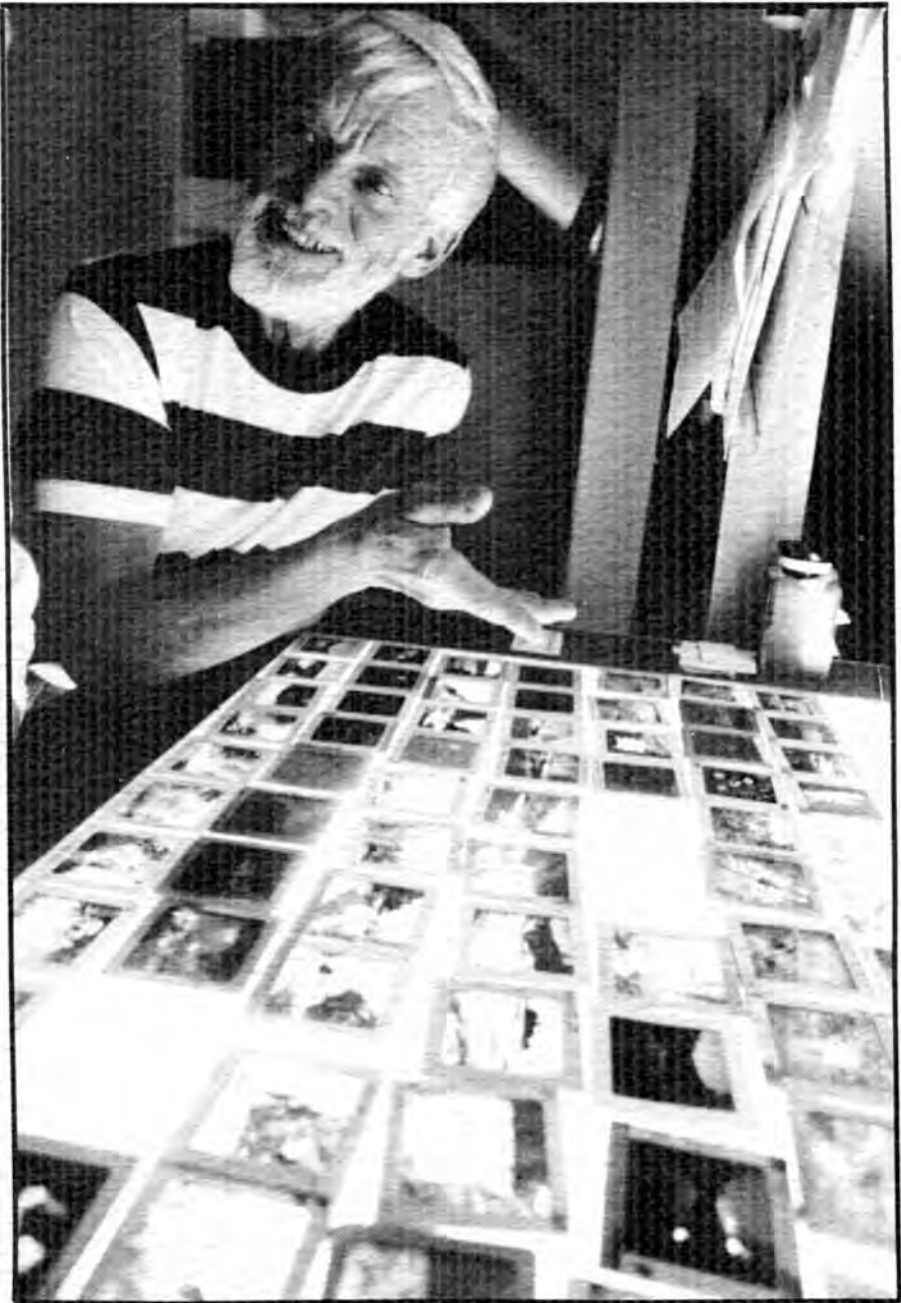
The first thing we noticed when we drove in to the Mason's is a large, open-sided "tower" with a roof on it. It became apparent that this is the world's largest canoe rack. A least 25 boats of varying condition are spaced among its timbers. Ancient basswood boats, battered fibreglass warriors, numerous Chestnut Prospectors and many others. They have one thing in common. They've been well used.

These were not the pristine samples of a calculating, considered collector. No, these were the boats of a man who LOVED canoes. Who worshipped their fine lines and enjoyed their company.

Bill invited Sean and me inside. He was right on final deadline for *Song of the Paddle* and very busy. He graciously took the time to show us around their beautiful home. It was difficult not to gawk. There, for instance, on the coffee table was *Paddle to the Sea* - the original! That little Indian canoe whose marvellous adventures were brilliantly told in Bill's first acclaimed film of the same name.

Upstairs is where the work is done. Paul was busy with drawings for his business (Canoetoons for the calendar). Bill showed me through his collection of slides and photos. So many familiar images! Long ago campfires and exciting rapids shots, some from as many as 20 years ago and more. All were carefully filed and labelled. The photo sequence for 'Song' was laid out across a couple of big tables. Another large area was for drawing and artwork.

We ate lunch downstairs, a wonderful



Bill Mason always ended his letters with his unique signature (top). When we visited Bill last year he showed us around his work area. He had an

impressive collection of slides and photos from his 40-plus years of canoeing. They were spread out here, to choose some for a canoe talk.

Continued

meal, with Joyce's fresh baked rolls and homemade soup. The telephone rang fairly regularly and Bill would disappear and deal with yet another call. Another demand, another request, for his time and talent. He gave of them both with great regularity, generosity and enthusiasm.

Bill Mason was born in 1929 and raised in Winnipeg. He would quit his job as a commercial artist each spring and spend the summer canoeing in the Manitoba wilds. Then every fall he'd come back and start again.

Bill and Joyce moved east in 1958 and shortly thereafter he got a job in film. He helped Christopher Chapman make a film on Quetico Provincial Park in the late fifties (Bill is the canoeist) and had realized then that film was the medium for him.

In 1960, he began what was to be a 25-year association with the National Film Board, for which he created such memorable films as *Rise and Fall of the Great Lakes*, *Cry of the Wild*, and the *Path of the Paddle* series. All told, Bill's 18 films garnered more than 60 national and international awards.

His final film was *Waterwalker*. A compilation of all his thoughts about canoeing. He put all of his energy and financial resources into this film. It was more than a movie. Such was Mason's commitment to this beautiful film, that he meant it to be seen in a big theatre with Dolby sound, Bill rented a cinema for a one week run in Ottawa. Much to his delight it ran for six.

They held a memorial service in Ottawa for Bill on the Friday night after he died. It was Bill's church and it was packed. Bill was a devoted Christian and his friends generally fell into two groups. Canoeists and church-goers.

It was a very fitting evening. A vivid remembrance of a man whose life was filled with passionate belief in God and canoeing. Several of his friends talked and told stories. Even Joyce spoke to thank the huge numbers of friends for their support over the last difficult months. The mood, however, was upbeat. Two of Bill's favourite songs were sung; *Old Man River* and *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot*. After the service the different rooms of the church hall were used to show films, Bill's paintings, canoeing photos and memorabilia.

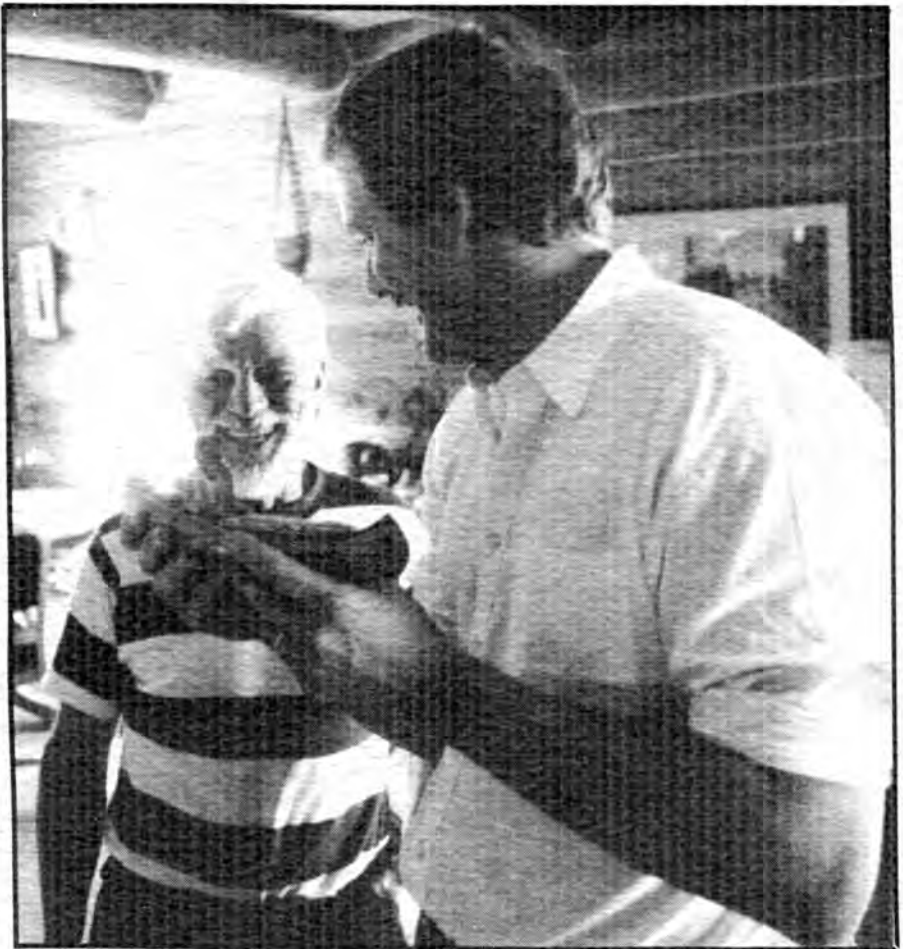
The final letter I got from Bill was last September. He returned the negatives I had loaned him. His illness was not public knowledge at this point and he made no mention of it.

"Just had a great trip on the Nahanni (yet again) and true to form, managed to swim in Hell's Gate with Joyce. Quite a swim if I do say so. I hope your trip went well. I'll be anxious to hear about it."

He didn't sign his name — just his trademark drawing. A sinking hand holding a paddle in a swamped canoe.

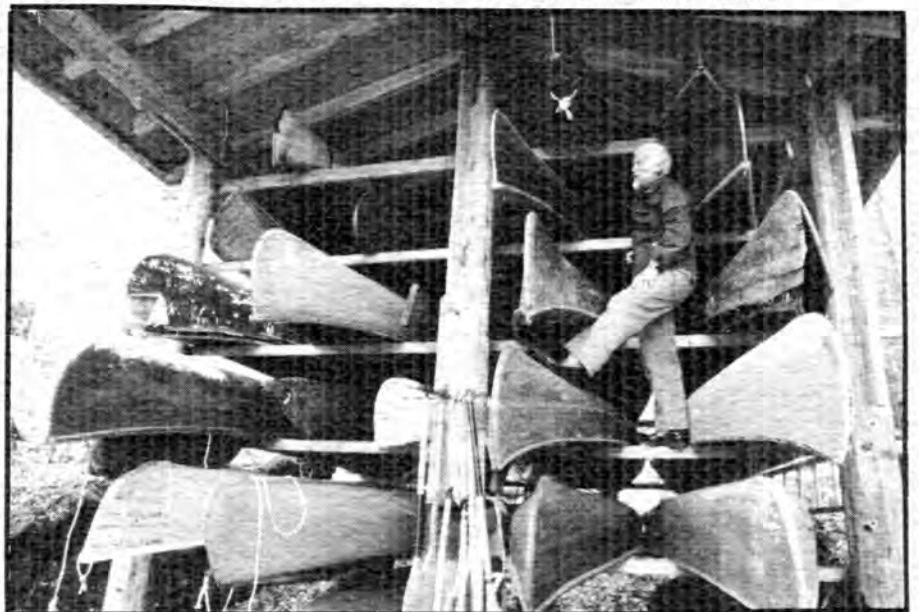
That hand is still firmly grasped around the heart and soul of every canoeist who was touched by the magic and spirit of Bill Mason.

Michael Peake



Above, Bill shows Sean Peake the original model of *Paddle to the Sea*, the title character from his award-winning movie of the same name, which now

lives in the living room of his Meech Lake log cabin. Below, Bill stands amidst his canoe rack and impressive collection of well-used canoes.



#200 and #1 Specials

A walk through the Woods

For many old-time Canadian trippers more than the memories remain.

Decades of paddling and portaging have a way of taking their toll on a tripper and his outfit. But tucked away, beside many a re-canvassed canoe and blackened pot, lies a patched, re-tumped, well-worn Woods pack - THE name in canoe packs.

As reported previously in Che-Mun, this century-old Canadian company had a bit of a troubled time a couple of years ago. But they're back - with a newly re-designed Woods packsack and a whole back-to-basics attitude.

The new Woods product range includes family sleeping bags and tents and some down clothing including their famous parka. The two canoe packs are the #1 Special and the #200.

The 200 is the pack of interest to serious wilderness trippers. The traditional double bottom canvas sack with axe sheath is duplicated with improvements - a re-inforced design, side pockets and a map pocket inside. The strap leather is thick and tough.

There's only one drawback. While the new packs are of the same 16-ounce canvas used for the last 10 years - they are not the old 18-ounce variety of years ago. It was those 18-ouncers that lasted the best.

The obvious question arises: why not? Price is the reason, according to Keith Milne, Woods' Sales Manager. The heavier cloth is more expensive and it would make the price of the finished bag too high for most consumers. The list prices (Canadian) for the two current packs are approximately \$75 for the #1, and \$130 for the 200.

The price theory apparently pays off. The #1's outsell the 200's ten to one.

While canoeists know Woods for these packs they are not the big item for the company. Family tents are the real money makers followed closely by sleeping bags.

On the Hide-Away Canoe Club's Povungniuk '88 trip in Ungava last summer, we took four Woods canoe packs - including three new ones. They all performed superbly as usual. Despite our large loads and abundance of tough portaging we had no problems with broken straps or split canvas. Unfortunately our big wind storm blew away one of the packs - naturally a new one.

Founded in 1885 by Jacques DuBois (or James Woods in English) the company supplied the lumber trade of the Ottawa Valley with clothing and canvas products. Monsieur Woods ran his company in a regal and autocratic manner. Cash accounts of the time show one of the most regular expenses was to provide champagne to the Woods' household.



Workers at the Woods plant in east end Toronto are hard at work on their famous packsacks. These particular

models are destined for Ontario's Ministry of Natural Resources to carry hose for use in forest fire fighting.

Following the founder's death in 1931, Harold Crabtree took over. An active outdoorsman, Crabtree expanded the company to the U.S. Woods products supplied many major expeditions including both of Admiral Byrd's polar trips, Roald Amundsen's worldwide expeditions and numerous other northern sojourns.

As a principal supplier to the famed Abercrombie and Fitch of New York, Woods was on the leading edge of outfitting in North America. Tough economic times and uncertain management led Woods through a slow decline until financial re-organization in 1984. The company is now privately owned and flourishing.

Che-Mun was recently given a tour of the old brick factory in the east end of Toronto where Woods has been turning out quality wear for decades. At the time, the women in the sewing area were putting the finishing touches on specially waterproofed orange-coloured Woods packs made especially for Ontario's Ministry of Natural Resources.

The MNR uses these packs for their forest fire fighting division. In fact the cardboard boxes used to haul hose are made to fit inside the Woods packs. As such, they are a difficult to obtain and highly prized canoeing 'secret' for the knowing wilderness tripper.

Che-Mun is glad to see that such an important part of Canadian canoeing is still flourishing. We plan to add some new Woods rookies to our veteran crew of prized canoeing packs. Like the company - we're sure they'll be around for a while.

If you are interested in finding out more about Woods and don't have a dealer near you, just write to the appropriate address. In Canada contact Woods Bag and Canvas, 401 Logan Ave, Toronto, Ontario M4M 2P2. In the States, write to Export Marketing Manager, Wood Bag and Canvas, 908 Niagara Falls Blvd., North Tonawanda, N.Y. 14120-2060 or for both phone 416/465-2403.



De Havilland's Twin Otter

Farewell, old friend

After 23 years and 844 airplanes, the final de Havilland Twin Otter rolled off the Toronto assembly line in early December 1988.

Northern canoeists who know nothing about aviation have a special place in their hearts for this legendary aircraft that helped open the Canadian north and countless other areas of the world.

For wilderness trippers the Twin Otter is often the final jump into a remote northern trip. Or, the welcome (or bittersweet) link to civilization at the end of an 'epic' journey.

When the first of the twin-engine aircraft made its inaugural flight on May 20, 1965, the company hoped for sales of 150 units. The rest is history and the price rose like its production run. The original Twin Otter price tag was \$248,000, the final one, \$2.5 million.

De Havilland was bought by the Boeing Corporation in 1986. It had previously been owned by the federal government who bought it from Hawker Siddeley.

The Twin Otter, or DHC-6, emerged during a hectic period at de Havilland. The single engine Otter had been in production since 1951 and was coming to the end of its life. (It would cease production in 1967).

The Twin was in response to a need for a heavier payload and multi-engine safety. Men like Max Ward, who was building his small northern airline into what today is Canada's number three passenger carrier, were the force behind such changes.

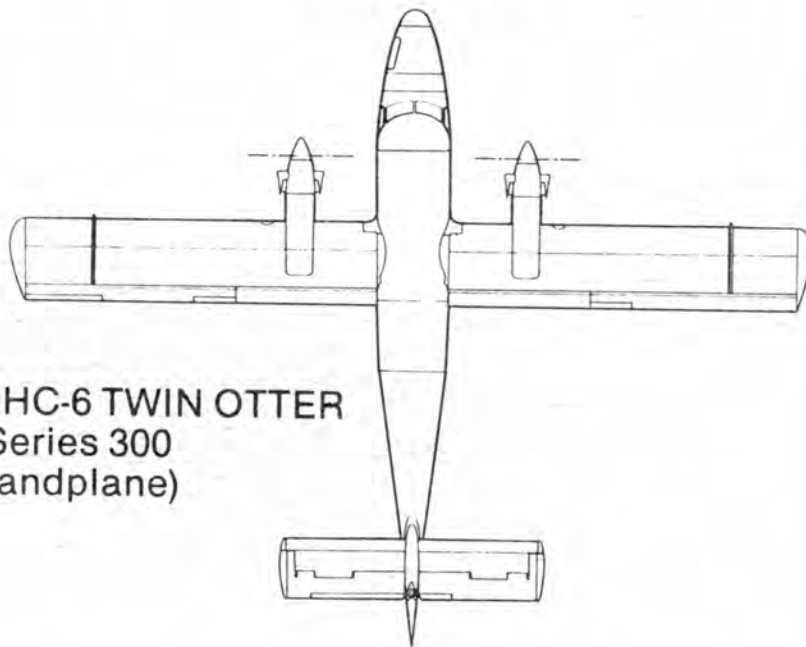
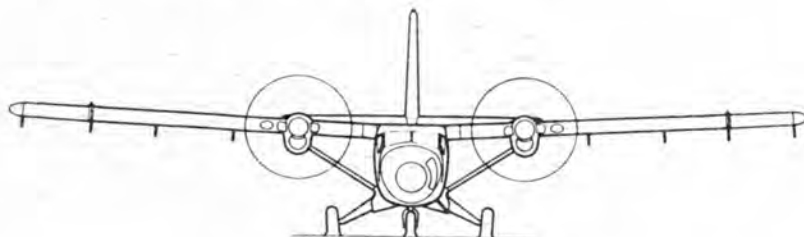
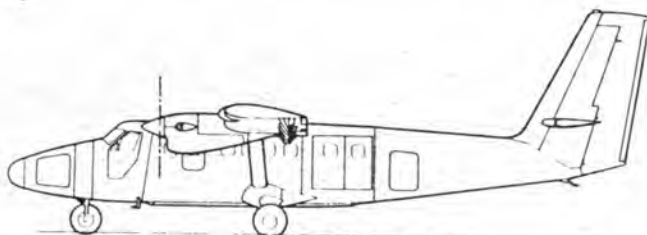
Ironically, the big push came from Viet Nam where U.S. Army Otters were the best method of getting around. They needed a greater payload and two engines. That need, combined with the development of the Pratt and Whitney PT6 engine, made the Twin Otter a reality.

In a quick re-design period, the original Otter design's length was increased by five feet and the wingspan by seven feet. The plane was certified in April 1966 and first delivery was made in July of that year. The Twin was immediately in the bidding for an order of 100 for the U. S. Army. When the Army changed specifications at the last minute, de Havilland lost out to a competitor.

Despite that apparent setback the Twin, dubbed the Ugly Duckling by some publications, was in the right place at the right time. Its price and performance attracted many buyers worldwide. Orders started to flow from Australia, Chile and Afghanistan. It was the burgeoning Canadian north that attracted a great deal of interest. The plane, with its floats, skis and oversize balloon tires for tundra was the perfect machine for that difficult land.

The growing U.S. commuter market provided a surprise area in which the Twin Otter flourished. Meanwhile the Ontario Government launched Norontair which linked many northern settlements. By 1968 sales had reached 102 for the year. Its multi-use abilities were being recognised.

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**DHC-6 TWIN OTTER
(Series 300
Landplane)**

Besides commuting it was useful for photography, fire bombing, ice patrols and remote supply.

One epic 3,500 mile delivery flight of three Twin Otters was from Toronto to a Peruvian town on the Amazon River. This included stops in Charleston, S.C., Nassau and a harrowing landing on a flooded river in Colombia flowing at 20 knots and dodging floating palm trees.

The Twin Otter started at Series 100 and ended up at Series 300S with a beefed-up engine and performance specifications. These specs include a cabin length of (Note: canoe owners) 18 feet 6 inches, a

range of 830 miles, maximum speed 196 m.p.h., and maximum disposable cargo of 4,600 pounds on floats and 5,100 pounds on wheels. (The basic weight of the aircraft was 7400 lbs.)

Now that the Twin is no longer manufactured it doesn't mean it will immediately disappear from the skies. There are other discontinued de Havilland planes which still proudly and efficiently serve the north and the northern canoeist. The Beaver was in production between 1947-67 and sales totalled 1098 military and 533 civilian planes. This was followed briefly by the Turbo Beaver from 1963-68 with a total of



The last Twin Otter off the line and (left) old DeHavilland logos.

60 produced. The single Otter was made between 1951-67 and sold 466 units. Original selling prices for these planes were; \$21,000 for the Beaver and \$80,000 for an Otter.

In our group's 1985 Morse River Expedition we flew a Twin Otter from Lynn Lake, Manitoba to the border of Saskatchewan and the N.W.T. We were flown out 55 days,

and 1,000 miles of paddling later by another Twin Otter from the mouth of the Back River to Baker Lake. A couple of months later while covering the destruction of the town of Armero by a volcano induced mudslide, I was among a group of journalists who chartered a Twin Otter to fly into that devastated town where 25,000 people

lost their lives. Two very different trips with one thing in common.

It had always been an exotic pipe-dream of our canoe group, the Hide-Away Canoe Club, to buy our own Twin Otter to be used just for our canoe trips. I guess now, we'll just have to settle for a used one.

News & Notes cont'd.

CANOE CARD . . . The Canadian Recreational Canoeing Association (CRCA) has gotten together with the Bank of Nova Scotia to promote the development of a Canoe Credit Card that will be used to assist the efforts of organized canoeing in Canada. When you sign up for this special card the CRCA will receive between .25% - .4% of the total bill and \$2 for each canoeist signed up. The money will be used for CRCA projects such as the Canadian Canoe Route Environmental Clean-up Project among others. Once 3000 canoeists have signed up, a specially designed Canoe card will be developed for all cardholders. This arrangement is called an Affinity Card Program and has been used by groups such as the Sierra Club to raise both money and awareness. You can tear the card up at any time and simply notify the bank you have done so. So, if you're the type who wants to put your money where your paddle is - this one's for you. To sign up or for more info contact the CRCA, Box 500, Hyde Park, Ontario N0M 1Z0 or call 519/473-2109. Fax: 519/472-0768.

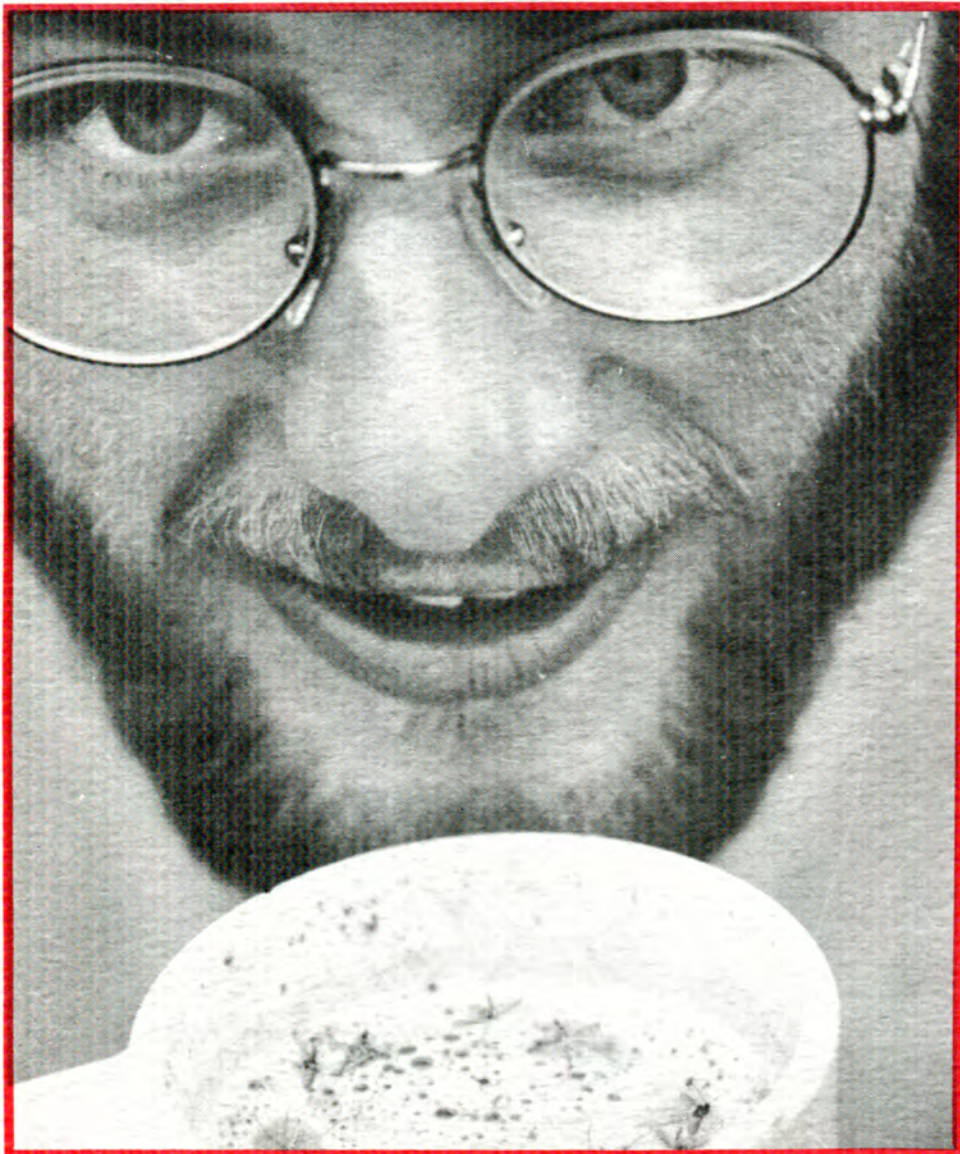
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CREEPIN' CREEBEC . . . Air Creebec, a regional airline owned by the native people of northern Quebec, has announced plans to expand into northern Ontario. The six-year-old airline, based in Val d'Or, has bought eight aircraft and other assets from Air Ontario who are backing out from some of their routes. Plans call for scheduled passenger service in Timmins to Moosonee, Fort Albany, Attawapiskat among others. There will also be extended charter service in northern Ontario in conjunction with the native group Nishniawbe Aski and Kelner Airways of Pickle Lake under the name Oji-Cree Airways. Air Creebec employs 60 people and had revenues of \$7.7 million last year. This is good news to northern canoeists. Besides opening up new areas with scheduled service and charter possibilities, Air Creebec is among the (few) airlines that charge by the pound for canoes - not by volume. You are able to put your canoe right in the passenger cabin - if there's room! The company uses the Hawker-Siddeley 748 airplane.

LOGGERHEADS . . . The battle over the last accessible stands of white pine in the Temagami area of northern Ontario has taken a bad turn with the Ontario government announcing that two logging roads will be built. The fight has been going on for a while. The Red Squirrel Road extension had received a lot of attention most notably from media celebrities like David Suzuki and Farley Mowat who opposed it. The road would link existing logging roads and allow a marginally operating mill in the town of Temagami to stay open for a while longer. The William Milne and Sons mill employs 150 people and there is disagreement whether the Red Squirrel extension would indeed save it. The bank has already called their \$5 million loan. The road would also run very close to Bruce Hodgins' Camp Wanapitae, a long established tripping camp. The government's decision is moot for now. No all-weather road construction can start until the spring. By that time, no doubt other developments will be unfolding. Meanwhile the majestic white pine will stand tall and silent for another winter. Perhaps their last?

The following back issues of Che-Mun are available for \$4.

- Outfit 38 - Fort William Rendezvous, Maggie River
- Outfit 39 - Trans Canada Canoe Expedition/David Pelly*
- Outfit 40 - Eric Morse Tribute/Story of "Les Voyageurs"*
- Outfit 41 - Grand Canal Project/Thlewiazsa River solo
- Outfit 42 - The Morse River Expedition Part One (\$6)
- Outfit 43 - The Morse River Expedition Part Two (\$6)
- Outfit 44 - Bill Mason & Dog River/Athabasca letter
- Outfit 45 - River flows/Pipe River by Eric Morse
- Outfit 46 - Hudson to Ungava/Stew Coffin report
- Outfit 47 - Heritage Rivers/Trans Canada expedition
- Outfit 48 - Freshwater Saga - Morse memoirs/Slide fest
- Outfit 49 - Kayaking the Queen Charlottes/HBC sell off
- Outfit 50 - Royal couple canoe the Hanbury-Thelon(\$5)
- Outfit 51 - Traditional canoeing through Quetico Park
- Outfit 52 - Lands Forlorn, Atomic Arctic Proposal*
- Outfit 53 - Ungava Crater Expedition, Hubbard/Wallace
- Outfit 54 - Povungnituk 88 Expedition, Sleeping Island



HERE'S BUG IN YOUR EYE — Operation Raleigh Venturer Bruno Drolet from Quebec prefers mosquitos to marshmallows in his hot chocolate. Bruno discovered the northern treat during last summer's Arctic Expedition on the Kazan River, NWT.

Subscribers note

We again offer our usual reminder to subscribers to check the expiry date on their address label. For those expiring with this outfit it will bear an expiry date of W88. Also, please note the list of back issues on page 11. The price includes postage.

And speaking of postage, effective January 1, Canada Post, yet again, raised postal rates. It now costs just under a dollar to mail an issue to the U.S. and that's a big part of our costs. Che-Mun plans no subscription increases in the near future. We'll hold off as long as we're able to keep the subscriber base growing.

Che-Mun

Founded by Nick Nickels

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